

## Spray painting for Earth

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### Pages 20-21 Snow in the Nest

You can find a winter wonderland even in the dry capital! Head for the Bird's Nest.



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## Hostels with local spirit

International travellers with a tight budget can still experience the real Beijing thanks to some creative Youth Hostels run by passionate hostellers.

# Four lives under one sky



The fast-paced modern world looks a lot different when seen through a child's eyes. French filmmaker Thomas Balmes spent 400 days capturing the lives of four infants born in Namibia, Mongolia, Japan and the US. His documentary, *Babies*, was the opening film at the second iDOCS International Documentary Festival in Beijing.

His recording of life's first steps reveals a purity grown-ups often refuse to recognize when confronted with the lifestyle of another culture.

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# Esperanto lives on despite shortage of speakers

By Zhang Dongya

It has been more than a century since Esperanto came to China, but this year's annual Esperanto Forum of Peking Esperanto Association (PEA), held last Saturday, was a somber reminder of just how little the language has spread.

Estimates put the nationwide total at 10,000 or fewer active speakers.

The association, founded in 1981, reached its zenith in the 1980s when more than 6,000 people were regularly attending training classes in Esperanto. Today it has dwindled to 300 members, 30 to 40 of whom frequently participate.

## Decline in Beijing

Chu Junmei, 36, joined the Esperanto association in 1996 and has since taken charge of the group's publications and website.

"Esperanto has much in common with English, so I found that learning Esperanto gave my English ability a boost in vocabulary, grammar and translation," Chu said.

In the mid 1990s, Esperanto was part of the foreign language examination. Chu said it was a popular choice among test candidates since it was easier to learn than English.

However, the language has since been purged from the evaluations in Beijing, though it still remains an option in Sichuan Province.

The opening of China in the early 1980s prompted a renaissance in language study, including constructed languages like Esperanto. For many, language learning was a way to win promotions or residence certificates.

In the run up to the International Esperanto Conference, held in Beijing in 1986, the government organized many training classes to encourage study of the language.

But since the 1990s – outside of select central media groups – Esperanto programs have vanished.

"The decline of the language is due to many factors, including poor governmental support and limited job opportunities for Esperanto speakers," Chu said.

For members in the Beijing association, Esperanto is a hobby.

Most members are in their 40s and 50s and spend 20 yuan per year on their membership dues. Membership grants them access to monthly lectures and discussions.

"Most members have other jobs and are casual participants. We do not see anyone using the language professionally. Without our own offices, classrooms or financial support, it is hard for us to organize training classes," Chu said.

Occasionally, members from other associations in the provinces of Heilongjiang, Shandong,



The Sichuan Esperanto Association receives lecturers from abroad.

Photos provided by Xu Jie



Young students learn at Esperanto training class.

Hunan and Hubei will come to meet up with the Beijing association. International visitors include speakers from Australia and Poland.

## Sichuan's support

While the situation may look grim in Beijing, things are different in the Sichuan Esperanto Association. Many young people in the province are learning Esperanto in training classes and trying to popularize it online.

Founded in 1916, the Sichuan Esperanto Association is one of the oldest in the country. Most of its 200 members are younger than 30.

Xu Jie, 26, deputy secretary-general of the association, joined two years ago.

"I saw an Esperanto textbook in my university library and started to teach myself," Xu said.

Finishing the textbook, Xu practiced his writing skills by writing letters to Esperanto speakers abroad and practiced his speaking with the Esperanto

Corridor organized by Sichuan Esperanto Association.

Xu said most young people in the association have a similar experience in learning the language.

Today, Xu teaches a training class once a month. He also spends his spare time translating Esperanto materials for student's roads and transport bureau.

"It is a small class with 10 people, but it is probably the only professional training class for Esperanto in the country," he said.

Students pay 500 yuan to join. After 20 hours of class, a student can expect to master basic writing, reading and speaking skills. They class also helps introduce students to Esperanto speakers abroad so they can be pen pals.

The group also posts job vacancies for Esperanto users. Xiao Fujun, deputy president of the association, owns an international trade company doing business in Esperanto. The company employed two students from the training class.

But more importantly, Sichuan Province preserves Esperanto as a foreign language option for those sitting the professional evaluation exam. Xu passed the primary Esperanto examination in lernu, an Esperanto-leaning network.

## Equal footing

"Using one nation's language as a lingua franca is only a temporary solution. It used to be French. Today it is English. Tomorrow it might be Chinese. But this is always unfair to other nations, since people in other countries have to waste time mastering the language," Xu said.

"Esperanto puts everyone on an equal footing and is easy to learn. I still believe Esperanto will be the language of the future."

But Esperanto appears dead throughout most of the rest of the country.

"Some associations whose membership is mainly teachers and professors exist mainly for academic exchange," he said.

The Sichuan Esperanto Association gets people returning from abroad, managers and office staff, making the group younger and more dynamic.

"They have a better idea how to manage an association with modern appeal," he said.

Outside the associations, most young Esperanto speakers congregate online using Douban and Tencent groups: the Lernu network alone has more than 7,000 registered speakers.

"Esperanto has experienced ups and downs in its hundred years of development. It is very possible it may rise again in the future," he said.

## Law to limit death penalty for aged killers

By Han Manman

The death penalty may cease to be an option for people being tried for murder after the age of 75, according to a pending amendment to the nation's criminal law.

The stipulation – granting an exception only in cases of extreme cruelty – appeared in the second draft of the eighth amendment to the criminal law code submitted Monday to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

While the draft does not completely ban the death penalty for persons over the age of 75, it is a new benchmark in the protection of human rights and one tied to traditional culture, said Liu Renwen, a researcher at the Institute of Law at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

While critics say the amendment may open the door to a surge in premeditated crimes committed by the elderly or their use by criminal gangs as hit men, Liu said the latest revision closes these loopholes.

Liu said he believes the advantages of the amendment outweigh its disadvantages.

The draft revision also amplifies the punishments for drunk driving and drag racing.

A person caught driving under the influence of alcohol, regardless of circumstances, will be charged with reckless driving. The charge carries a jail sentence and fine.

Under the current law, drunk drivers are detained for 15 days and their license is suspended for no more than six months. Fines range from 500 to 20,000 yuan.

Last year, police caught more than 313,000 people driving under the influence of alcohol. Only 42,000 of these were convicted of reckless driving.

Drunk driving and drag racing remain the top causes of death on the roads.

The new amendment stipulates that drunk driving, even when it does not result in an accident, will be a criminal offense.

The current law makes the death penalty an option for 68 crimes. This amendment, the eighth to the country's 1997 criminal law code, would reduce that number to 55.

The reduction would be the first since 1979.

"If passed, it will be a big move by the government to limit use of the death penalty," Liu said.

The amendment is seen as part of a nationwide effort to "temper justice with mercy," he said.



# Dreams of higher education

## School's model helps neglected migrant students succeed

By Liang Meilan

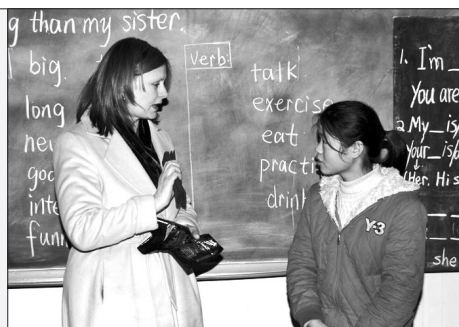
Rapid urbanization has brought some 400,000 migrant children to the capital. But for this group, getting an education remains an uphill battle.

While there are numerous private schools for migrant children and official policies to help get them into public schools, few that enter the public school system are able to exit and get a diploma from their junior high school.

Fewer still are permitted to enter senior high school, let alone university.

For migrant children, the only path to a higher education is to return to their unfamiliar hometown to finish high school and sit the National College Entrance Exam.

To help those children fulfill their college dreams in a continuous education environment, Dandelion Middle School, the only junior high school for migrant children in Beijing, is testing a feasible model that could work in the confines of the current education system.



### A child's dream

With half a year to go before the senior high entrance exams at the end of June, 9th grade students are entering their most intense phase of study.

Jiang Yu, a 15-year-old girl from Anhui Province, is among them. She is studying at Dandelion Middle School in Daxing District.

On weekdays, she and her peers sit 11 classes. On weekends, she returns to her parents' rented home on the urban fringe of Wangjing: a two-hour commute. Her father works for a small interior decorating company and her mother is a housekeeper. The family moved to Beijing when Jiang was an infant.

Jiang grew up on the city's outskirts and attended a primary school for migrant children. While her parents speak with a strong Anhui accent, Jiang speaks like a local.

A new compulsory education policy passed in 2008 allowed children without Beijing residency to attend the capital's public schools. Tuition is free for all the students, but the school makes up for this with extra fees to cover teaching facilities, textbooks, boarding and dining.

The least popular public schools charge 2,000; more competitive schools for college-bound students charge 20,000 yuan or more.

Jiang's family earns less than 3,000 yuan per month and cannot afford these fees despite her excellent exam scores. The family is already paying out the nose to send Jiang's younger brother to a public primary school in the neighborhood because there is no private alternative.

Dandelion, by comparison, charges 3,000 yuan per student, including all fees. Any difference is made up by donated funds. Jiang said that for 6 yuan per day, the school provides students with three meals in the school cafeteria.

"I'm really grateful to my parents for letting me continue my studies. Unlike many classmates, I'm quite lucky: my family is relatively better-off. My father even bought me a computer to help me study," Jiang said.

Her parents dream of her earning a degree at a top university; Jiang dreams the same.

But even being among the top three students at Dandelion doesn't make that dream any more achievable.



Sarah Brown, wife of former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown, visits Dandelion to support its sport program co-organized by a British NGO. Photos provided by Dandelion

### Cruel reality

The high school entrance exam Jiang and her classmates are preparing for is fake, even if its papers are the same as those given in public schools throughout the city.

"Unlike public school students who can choose their senior high according to their exam performance, Dandelion graduates are not permitted to apply for public school," said Cheng Jianfang, dean of studies at the school.

In Beijing, only 60 of the 300 schools for migrant children are accredited. The bulk of all schools are kindergartens and primary schools with low budgets and inexperienced teachers operating on the brink of bankruptcy.

But returning to one's hometown for high school presents other problems.

"Children who are born and raised in Beijing see this city as their hometown. It is hard for them to adapt to the village and small-town lifestyles of their 'legal' residences," Cheng said.

For many of these promising young students, the road to college ends after middle school.

Students in Dandelion are comparatively lucky because the school is devoted to finding a way for them to reach college, including helping them prepare for the senior high entrance exams.

The ninth grade students are competing for a coveted place in one of three senior high schools:



The classroom for 7th grade is a former factory.



The 7th grade classroom after decoration



The main teaching building is decorated with a rainbow painted by students.

the Guohua charity school in Guangdong and Beijing's two vocational high schools.

To be admitted to Guohua is Jiang's goal.

"I've heard the school, famous

for its teachers and hardworking students, has sent many students to Tsinghua and Peking university. So if I can get in, I might live up to my parent's expectations," she said.

### Testing reforms

Cheng, Dandelion's dean of studies and a former teacher in Shanxi Province, said the school is pushing creative education because it has little pressure on ensuring a certain quota of students to go on to high school.

"Though all schools are in the middle of compulsory education reforms, private schools like Dandelion have more freedom in exploring student-centered education models," she said.

In most of the country, students scribble furiously to mark everything their teachers say. There is an ever-present fear that they could miss something that will appear on the exam.

The focus on note-taking stops students from asking questions.

Dandelion prefers to have students learn by experience rather than through rote memorization.

In computer class, students take on the role of a professional — usually a teacher, engineer or doctor — before applying computer skills to complete their homework. Students who chose to be teachers are required to design a lesson in Microsoft PowerPoint, and then instruct the class to help peers find their own solutions.

"This vocation-oriented learning program ties together creative ideas and interdisciplinary knowledge. It helps students be prepared to use what they are learning in real social situations," she said. Many Dandelion students find employment after graduating from junior high.

Teamwork is another part of computer class. Homework is completed in two-student teams.

Dandelion is also testing some radical education methods for its English classes. Currently, it is using the Phonics course, an advanced English teaching approach combining oral and body language with pronunciation study.

This year, Dandelion saw its first group of students enter university. Last week, the students returned to the school for a thank you reunion.

Zhang Tiange, 18, was among those students. She was admitted to United World College, a charity university open to poor students from around the world in Norway this year after a two-year pre-college course in the same university.

"I'm happy to see Zhang has become confident and outspoken about world issues. And I hope more and more of our students can go abroad to fulfill their college dream," Cheng said.

But the problem remains that poor students are not essentially being denied their right to a public compulsory education. Private schools like Dandelion are only a transitional solution — one which at this time is not receiving serious government support.

"The government gives public schools 10,000 yuan for each student they enroll. The amount they give us is 130 yuan," Cheng said.

Even after reforms designed to grant fair access to education, the government's investment in migrant children's future remains anything but "fair."



# For the culturally curious

## Young hostellers show off their cities' culture

By Chu Meng

Youth Hostels in China, though still few in number, have grown rapidly during the last decade. Since the first opened in Guangzhou in 1998, the number of Chinese hostels has grown to 164. Among these, 14 are in Beijing.

The International Youth Hostel Association (IYHA) is the world's largest non-profit network of cheap, budget hostels for cultural exchange. It has more than 4,000 members in 80 countries.

The hostel movement began in 1910 in Altena, Germany. In the century since, hostels have helped young travelers connect with each other and the communities they visit. Today, many independent designers who are enthusiastic about budget travel and cultural exchange are joining the network.



More and more blue triangle signs are appearing in Beijing's hutongs.  
Photos provided by Kiki Wong



The courtyard of Peking International Youth Hostel



Hostel lounges are a place for world travelers to meet and share stories.

Liu Ke, 36, worked as a hotel operator and advertising designer. The Beijing native opened Beijing P Loft Youth Hostel in the dorms of an abandoned factory one block from Yonghegong Lama Temple in 2005.

On Monday, Liu returned from the 48th International Youth Hostel Association (IYHA) Biennial Convention in Shenzhen. It was the association's first convention in China, held in part to recognize the country's efforts to help the youth of the world.

In the last decade, China has opened 164 international youth hostels throughout the country: 14 are in Beijing.

### Open for cultural sharing

In the beginning, Liu just wanted to make a destination for budget travelers. "Soon I found I wanted my hostel to be more than just an inn. I realized this could be a window to share Beijing's culture with visitors," he said.

For most travelers, their hotel is their first brush with local culture. Hostels bear more responsibility for developing a cultural connection, since they tend to attract younger travelers.

Liu's Beijing P Loft Youth Hostel is the only loft hostel in the city.

Because it was built in a historic hutong area, one designated as a historical relic, the main structures in the factory's dorms had to be left as is.

He rebuilt the old boiler room into a public leisure room with a bar and pool tables, turned a two-story hall into loft guest rooms and set up the last room with indoor basketball and tennis courts.

After spending 4 million yuan over two years, the hostel is one of Beijing's most popular.

In addition to its great location, it serves a Western-style breakfast, takeaway lunch and provides dinner reservations. It also assists guests with bicycle rentals and provides books on the city's history.

### From zero to creative

People travel to experience other cultures as much as they do

to take in the sights, Liu said.

Reports from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that 54.7 million foreign overnight travelers came to China, making it the fourth most traveled country in the world. It is expected to become No. 3 this year, and tourist dollars will account for 7 percent of the annual GDP.

Rawdon Lau, lead consultant at YHA China, said the tourism market has exploded since 2007, especially after the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The Shanghai Expo and Guangzhou Asian Games this year sent another flood of travelers to the country.

Statistics from the bureau also showed that 78 percent of foreign travelers are younger than 55, and 24 percent of these younger travelers prefer backpacking.

"Young foreign travelers' first choice is a youth hostel, not an economy hotel. Money is one reason, and cultural curiosity is another. The city's hostel operators know this, and that's why they emphasize decoration that emphasizes local style," said Lau, former secretary general of the IYHA UK from 1988 to 2002.

"It makes the traveler's stay that much more memorable."

Lau received the phone call in late spring 1998, when he was director of the China Travel Center in London: it was the call that would open China to hostels.

A division head from the Guangdong Provincial Tourism Administration had stayed in a youth hostel in Germany during his visit, unaware of the hostel program. When he returned to Guangdong and wrote about it in his report, his bosses decided to contact the IYHA to get involved.

Two weeks later, Lau was on his way to Guangdong with then IYHA President Friedrich Muth, director of the Ministry of Education in Bavaria, Germany. The Guangdong Tourism Administration opened China's first youth hostel, the Guangzhou Riverside Youth Hostel, in the winter of 1998.

In order to expand the program, a team of nine volunteers

who spoke English, French and German were sent to Europe for a six-month training program funded by the Guangdong Tourism Administration.

Three months after the team returned to Guangzhou, YHA China passed its exams and was approved as the country's hostelling headquarters in September 1999.

### Hosts make the hostels

"China has a booming tourism market. That means China also has a promising youth hostel market," said Mikael Hansson, the current IYHA head, at the convention.

"The country's exotic cultural identity and historic heritage make it incredibly attractive to young travelers from around the world," he said.

Milla Kariina, 38, a Finnish photographer who is now an exchange scholar at Peking University's School of Human Resources, recalled his first trip to Beijing: "I wanted to spend Spring Festival in Beijing last year, so I came and lived in Beijing Lüsungyuan Youth Hostel for a week."

Lüsungyuan is famous for its Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) style. The original owner of the 170-year-old estate was Grand General Sengerinchin (1811-1865), who lived there while serving as Minister of Defense.

"If there is something we need to write down here, we use brushes and ink only. We also offer to teach foreign guests basic Chinese calligraphy if they are interested," Zhang Yan, the current owner, said.

Yin Chen, National Secretary of YHA China, said Beijing's youth hostels should be seen as part of the cultural and creative industry because of these extra cultural services.

"I am beginning to realize that a high quality youth hostel depends less on the use of expensive building materials than it does the charisma of the hosteller. Their passion adds to the atmosphere every bit as much as the design and surroundings," she said.



# Merry Christmas, China

Christmas comes earlier in China from a business perspective than it does in the US. Christmas tunes are playing on radio stations. Every Grade A and Grade B office building in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou is decked out with holiday displays. Christmas music is piped into elevators far and wide.

But looks can be deceiving. Just because China has embraced Christmas does not mean the country is becoming Western.



From a business perspective, Christmas comes earlier in Beijing than it does in the US.

Li Wenming/CFP Photo

## Christmas fever

"Children are celebrating Christmas. As parents we have to buy gifts for them so they won't feel neglected." So says Liu Qian, who is buying Holy Apples for her son from a street stall in Beijing.

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on Christmas in China, particularly among young people who regard it as an important and fashionable day to celebrate.

"We simply just want to have some fun on this day," explains Sai Wang, who works for an IT company in Beijing.

"Western holidays are more trendy for young people. There is no more sophisticated reason," he says.

Most Chinese who celebrate Christmas were born after 1980 and have no religious beliefs. Most have never read a Bible and many know nothing about what Christmas means to Christians.

Christmas Day is not an official holiday in China, but it is celebrated as much as any of the traditional Chinese festivals.

Shopping malls, restaurants and bars are decorated, Santa Claus figures are at the doors to solicit business and groups of Chinese people gather to celebrate.

They send gifts to each other, drink alcohol and say Merry Christmas in English – with many having no idea of why.

Promotional offers attract customers during what has become an important day for the retail industry

## Booming business

"China has become the factory of the world, and most Christmas gifts are made in

China," says professor Kent Deng from the London School of Economics.

Once you factor in China's high-speed economic growth and how young people are starting to accept Western values and see them as fashionable, it is not surprising that Christmas is celebrated on such a big scale.

Throughout the Christmas period, almost all the shopping malls in China have large-scale promotional activities, and Taobao has a Christmas theme on its home page.

## Ph.D. students call for boycott

Every year, there are calls for boycott of Western festivals. This Christmas is no exception. Ten Ph.D. students majoring in education, art and philosophy circulated an online petition that called for the public to boycott Christmas celebrations.

They said in their statement that Western festivals are part of an invasion of Western culture.

The students from prestigious universities as Peking University, Tsinghua University and Nanjing University.

In their statement, they say Christmas celebrations have trumped celebrations of Chinese holidays and that people should respect Chinese culture.

But not everyone agrees. According to an online survey, about 80 percent of respondents say they feel celebrating Christmas doesn't matter. It is a holiday and an excuse to take a break with loved ones rather than a religious celebration, one netizen said.

(BBC and agencies)

## The third eye

## Why is Christmas hot in China?

What has driven Chinese people to pursue this Western tradition? Tom Doctoroff from the Huffington Post gave his opinions:

There are two reasons. First, Christmas is win-win. It fuses fun, a universal release, with transactional gain. Second, and more subtly, Western holidays, particularly Christmas and Valentine's Day, are useful tools in reinforcing individual identity within a Confucian – yes, a Confucian – context.

To the Han, Christmas is not "Western." Instead, the holiday is "international" and "modern" and carries a whiff of status, the ultimate commodity in face-driven China. Individuals are

declaring themselves new generation players, able to absorb new elements and apply them in a Chinese framework.

On an even deeper level, Christmas is an investment in the future. Men here carry a heavy burden. In matters of the heart, women are demanding. Mothers-in-law will not approve of a prospective groom unless he can afford an apartment, an increasingly elusive requirement given skyrocketing real estate costs. Cars have become "must buys" for couples intent on entering the ranks of the middle class.

But, in anti-individualistic China, a society in which the clan remains the basic produc-

tive unit, love is not enough to seal the deal. Men need to, first and foremost, prove themselves. They must establish their commitment in terms of both emotional dedication and material potential. The Christmas gift is one more opportunity for young Chinese men to proclaim, "Darling, I would do anything for you." It has been embraced as a means of demonstrating steadfastness.

Chinese adoption of Christmas rituals does not imply "Westernization." It has been co-opted to advance a distinctly Chinese agenda: projection of status in a culture in which individual identity is inextricably linked to external validation.

## Survive Christmas in China

## Ways for expats to beat homesick blues

No matter where you're from, being away from your home country during the holiday season is not easy. But being abroad at Christmas time doesn't mean you have to sit around and mope – here are some ideas to help you beat the holiday blues and make China feel more like home.

### 1. Have a holiday feast

The holidays are one time when you can justify splurging on some imported goods, so invite some friends over, expat and Chinese alike, and have a holiday feast complete with turkey, ham, stuffing and other traditional holiday fixings.

### 2. Put up a Christmas tree

Even a fake one! It's hard to get into the holiday spirit without

a tree. Most big Chinese shopping centers will have plastic trees of varying size and tackiness. They aren't expensive.

### 3. Organize a Secret Santa gift exchange

A big part of Christmas is gift giving, but without a big extended family, Christmas gifts can seem a bit anticlimactic. Organize a gift exchange at work or among your friends and get together on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day to exchange presents.

### 4. Spread Christmas cheer

As the Chinese know, Christmas is the perfect time to have a party! If you find yourself alone on Christmas, consider going out and joining in the wacky Chinese revelry, fake snow and all.

### 5. Go caroling

Why not? Singing in groups is not considered strange in China, and a group of foreigners singing Christmas songs would most likely be warmly welcomed by most. Or, if you're not brave enough to fill your neighborhood with song, download a few Christmas carols to put on your portable music player.

### 6. Explain the meaning of Christmas

China generally thinks of Christmas as a time to party, dress in funny outfits, wave glow sticks and get drunk. Take the opportunity to talk to your Chinese friends about why and how Westerners celebrate Christmas. (Agencies)



# Breaking up the 'Big Four'

## Local CPA firms challenge best of the West

By Huang Daohen

Certified Public Accountant (CPA) firms, both foreign- and domestic-funded, have started a storm of mergers reshaping the country's accounting industry.

The surprising merger of two local firms, Zhongrui and Yuehua, in 2007 came amid government plans to nurture domestic firms for expansion abroad.

But the country aims to create big CPA firms in the face of increasing globalization of the country's capital market. What challenges await a Chinese CPA that plans to go global, and can domestic expansion break the domination of the Big Four?



Domestic accounting firms' growth is putting them in competition with the West.

### Big Four's domain

Massive foreign direct investment (FDI) into China and huge initial public offerings (IPOs) by domestic companies have made China a battleground for business.

But accounting was a battle that ended before it began. From the moment the government revived its accounting industry in the 1980s, the market has been dominated by the Big Four: KPMG, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Ernst & Young and Deloitte & Touche.

Though they were required to conduct business through joint ventures and were prohibited from conducting audits until the early 1990s, these firms rose to dominate the industry, said Chen Yugui, Secretary General of Chinese Institute of CPAs (CICPA).

"At that time there were few accountants, let alone those who could conduct an audit to international accounting standards," Chen said.

According to a recent figure by Bloomberg News, the Big Four claimed about 44 percent of the revenue among China's top 100 CPA firms last year.

Last year, more than 200 state-owned enterprises became listed abroad, creating an audit market worth more than \$200 million. The Big Four provides CPA services to 96 percent of the



Chiu believes accountants will play a bigger role in management.

Photo provided by HK ICPA

companies listed on the NYSE and 72 percent of those listed on NASDAQ.

Today, the Big Four are accelerating the opening of new branch firms throughout China, each with as many as 10,000 employees, Chen said.

### Domestic expansion

But the government has supported rapid development of domestic accounting firms. In late 2009, the State Council outlined a five-year plan to make domestic firms more competitive.

Chinese accounting firms are encouraged to go abroad, either by opening offices overseas or

acquiring foreign firms.

The eventual goal of the plan is to provide international services to Chinese enterprises, Chen said.

China's outbound foreign investment jumped about 50 times in the past decade, and by 2015, the outbound investment is expected to achieve parity with inbound investment.

"Large domestic accounting firms must be capable of serving Chinese companies as they venture abroad," he said.

After rounds of mergers and acquisitions, firms like Zhongrui Yuehua have built their own brands. Shinewing, a leading domestic firm, acquired a Hong Kong competitor and opened offices in Australia, Japan and Singapore.

### Challenges ahead

Susanna Chiu, council member of HKICPA (Hong Kong Institute of CPAs), said one of the biggest obstacles for local CPA firms to overcome is to see their work accepted abroad.

Chinese accounting and auditing standards differ from those in Hong Kong and the West, and overseas stock exchanges like the NYSE and HKSE rarely accept reports audited by mainland firms.

Chiu said the HKICPA and the CICPA are working together on

this problem. There are plans for a mutual recognition agreement that would allow Hong Kong CPAs to practice on the mainland and allow Chinese CPAs the same rights in Hong Kong.

Chiu said there is a growing awareness of the importance of ethics. "Without public trust, the profession will have no future," she said, pointing to the growing role of accountants in company management.

The change has been especially visible since the global economic crisis, Chiu said. "The accountants bring greater oversight and supervision, and help companies manage risk more effectively."

### Crisis for the Big Four?

Chen said the domestic firms' expansion may shake up the Big Four. While the Big Four still dominate the international services market in China, Chen said this is changing.

Statistics from CICPA show that last year, 16 domestic firms had an annual revenue of 300 million yuan: a top international firm had revenue of around 2.6 billion yuan.

"The gap is actually narrowing," Chen said.

That narrowing and the competition that comes with it can only spell good news for the market, Chiu said.

## Related

### QP case analysis competition to help future CPAs

A Qualification Program (QP) case analysis competition, hosted by the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HK ICPA), was held recently at the Westin Hotel, Beijing, to give up and coming accounting students hands on experience.

About 240 universities from across the country applied to send teams to the event. After months of competition, eight teams were selected. Students were asked to investigate and analyze a specific business case for a corporation.

The winner was United Inter-

national College (UIC), a school in Zhuhai founded by Beijing Normal University and Hong Kong Baptist University. Zhongnan University of Economics and Law came in second and Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics third.

This was the second QP competition sponsored on the Chinese mainland by the HK ICPA.

"By participating in the competition, students developed business skills and professional judgment. It was a chance to prepare themselves for their future

careers," said Nancy Tse, a council member of HK ICPA and head of the judging panel.

Chew Fook Aun, vice president of HK ICPA, said the demand for talented accountants has exploded on the mainland. But the poor training market has left a shortage of CPAs.

Chew said HK ICPA has worked out multiple training plans with mainland authorities.

Huang Beibei, who headed the UIC team, said the competition was a good opportunity for students like her to get real world

experience. "What we learn from books is only technical knowledge. We have to know how to apply it in a practical business context," she said.

Huang is determined to be a CPA and said she is optimistic about the future of domestic accounting firms. However, she said she plans to choose an international accounting firm after graduation.

"Working for renowned organizations will help me learn more about the industry, but I plan to join a domestic firm in the end," she said.

## Wealthy Chinese buy foreign homes

Strict policies introduced by the government to cool the real estate market in the capital have led many of the city's richest residents to look overseas for real estate investments.

At a recent three-day 2010 Beijing Luxury Properties Showcase at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, more than 4,000 wealthy people attended with plans to invest more than 10 million yuan (\$2 million) each in foreign assets, organizers said.

Ashley Woo, the sales and marketing manager of the event, said organizers invited 51 domestic and international real estate agencies that had businesses in more than 30 countries.

Projects being promoted included ancient castles, modern apartments and ecologically important land in Canada as well as luxury villas in Thailand and real estate in large cities in the US and Japan.

Woo said the average visitor to the show were people in their 50s looking to diversify their portfolios with foreign real estate. Some wanted to purchase homes for their children studying abroad.

Joan Brothers, president and co-partner of Manhattan Global Properties, which was promoting four high-end apartment projects, said the Beijing market is very "exciting." She said two clients she met at the exhibition planned to fly with her to the US to see the properties.

The super-rich have been buying property in cities like London, New York and Tokyo for several years. With most of their wealth made from manufacturing outside China, their assets are freely movable.

Current legislation allows all Chinese nationals to own property abroad.

Individuals holding yuan can send approximately \$47,000 out of China each year. While this is not nearly enough to buy property in London, family members often pool funds to buy.

The newly opened Chinese banks, like the Bank of China in the UK, also grant express mortgages to Chinese nationals, making it possible for them to reach asking prices.

Many Chinese investors are now buying up London property.

If Chinese fiscal policy remains the same, the numbers of Chinese buying property in London looks set to increase.

(Agencies)



# Lesson of risk and sacrifice

## Policeman killed while rescuing students on Huangshan

By Wang Yu

On December 11, a group of students found themselves trapped in an area in Huangshan mountain, Anhui Province that was closed to the public. The local police department sent a rescue team to save the travelers, but on the way down a policeman fell to his death.

The travelers – 10 students from Fudan University – had originally planned to cross the undeveloped area of the mountain in two days. They ignored warnings about the area, which lacks signs and decent roads.

A student surnamed Tang, former chairman of Fudan's outdoor association and one of the leaders of the doomed expedition, said the route was not new and that many outdoor teams had walked across the area. Besides regular equipment, the team had GPS devices and professional maps on them.

However, during the trip, someone dropped the group's GPS in water and it stopped working. The students were soon lost, and then it began to rain. The team had to camp on high ground to avoid drowning; eventually they decided to send out an SOS.

A rescue team found them at midnight the next day. On the way down, Zhang Ninghai, a 24-year-old policeman, fell off a cliff. His body wasn't found until the next morning.

A member of the outdoor team said Zhang was holding onto a tree branch to keep balance and make way for a student when the branch broke.

Students refused media interviews and left for Shanghai without apologizing to Zhang's family.

Netizens soon began to voice their anger, criticizing the students for being cold-blooded. Team members' cell phone numbers were publicized as the "human flesh search engine" kicked into gear.

Hou Pan, a team leader, told *Beijing News* that he and his friends did not choose to run away. Most of them tried not to think about the accident because they were following a psychologist's advice. He said he has since met Zhang's parents and that they offered their forgiveness.



Fudan students mourn the death of a life-saving policeman.  
Gao Jianping/CFP Photo

### Comment

#### Not fair to the students

*This case reflects how overeager we are to use morality to judge people.*

*We are all common people. If I were one of the students, I doubt I would have had the courage to confront what happened.*

*Our society has heard many stories of cold-blooded actions, and this latest case just gives people an opportunity to vent their anger. That's not fair to the students.*

– Guo Qin, columnist

#### Be responsible for the team

*I don't want to judge the students, but I think the organizer failed his team. You*

*must always be prepared for the worst. Maps and GPS are not enough to get you out of trouble when you're on a mountain. Additionally, they were overconfident in themselves, traveling that route without a guide.*

– Su Zhen, outdoorsman

#### They didn't kill the officer

*You can't call the students cold-blooded – the students didn't kill the police officer.*

*But, it's clear that they were unprepared for the mountain, and that's their mistake.*

– David Reynolds, soccer coach from the UK

#### A generation with problems

*Every generation has its problems, but I think things are more serious with young people born in the '80s – even worse than the '90s. Maybe it's because they grew up in a time when the country has changed so fast that values have been distorted.*

*In this case, the students were too confident in themselves. But they didn't have the courage to face up to the death of the police officer. Nothing is more valuable than human life – they need to understand that.*

– He Yuxin, newspaper editor

# More postgraduates discontinuing their study

By Zhang Dongya

Many universities have reported an increase in the number of dropouts from their graduate programs this year.

In the past, the college admission process in China was described as "troops of mounted and foot soldiers forcing their way through a single-plank bridge." But more people are enrolling in college these days, especially top-tier ones.

More are also dropping out.

At Zhongnan University of Economics and Law in Wuhan, Hubei Province, for example, reported that 38 graduate students chose to stop their study. Most of them found jobs, the university said. Another 36 incoming students decided to postpone their admission until next year.

In Wuhan's China University of Geosciences, 29 graduate students out of 1,700 failed to enroll for the new term, including four Ph.D. candidates. A professor in the Politics and Law School of the University said there were three

dropouts from his department; two had found jobs, and a third was preparing for the civil service exam, *China Education Daily* reported.

Undergraduates are eschewing college education as well.

Wuhan University, the top university in Hubei Province, said it had 63 students fail to enroll this year. Of those, six found jobs, 19 chose to study abroad and 19 quit because they did not like their course of study.

Some even switched to vocational schools, which offer the promise of a good job after graduation.

Some critics have used this trend as evidence of the weakness of secondary – especially graduate-level – schools in China.

With an increasing number of students choosing to pursue Master's degrees overseas, China's postgraduate universities are meeting an unprecedented challenge.

### Comment

#### Good reasons to go abroad

*I went to Australia for a Master's, and compared with the experiences of my friends who stayed home, I feel there are more advantages to studying overseas.*

*The first one is, you have more choices abroad. You can change your major as you like, so you don't have to quit university just because you dislike your major.*

*Also, there are better resources. Sydney University, for example, has a supremely good library. The libraries at Tsinghua and Peking University just can't compete.*

*And because of the social environment and culture, professors actually do research and scholarship with curiosity and enthusiasm. When they learn something new, they get excited, and seeing their enthusiasm is very touching for me.*

– Sherry Wu, 28, human resources employee

#### Dropouts waste opportunity that could go to others

*I failed to enter my favorite college and had to study in a vocational school. To some extent, those who give up admission to college do us wrong because they're wasting a chance that we would gladly take.*

*Colleges should think about changing their policy so that spots vacated by dropouts can be filled by people who actually want them.*

– Jinjin01, netizen on news.hainan.net

#### Impulsive decision-making

*When postgraduates abandon their study for jobs, it reflects their impetuosity and utilitarianism. The department they were in may lose the chance to make a breakthrough achievement in the field.*

– Cheng Sihui, dean of the Institute of Education Sciences in Wuhan University



# Italian film producer and critic analyzes Chinese film market



Marco Mueller

Photo provided by Luo Rui

By Chu Meng

One of the most important foreigners to the Chinese film industry returned to Beijing on Saturday to screen a selection of films for an 11-day festival called Great Italian Films from Venice to Beijing.

Marco Mueller, who has dedicated himself to exposing Chinese films to worldwide audiences for the last 10 years, presented award-winning films from this year's Venice International Film Festival, where he was artistic director for the second time.

He spoke about his understanding of the current Chinese film market.

"China never lacks great movies," he said. "And the vitality of Chinese films no longer needs confirmation."

Mueller has had extended relations with Chinese films and filmmakers. In October, he was presented China's prestigious Friendship Award from Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, who was visiting Rome.

Mueller first arrived in China in 1974 to study anthropology. When he returned to college, he began watching black-and-white Chinese films and spent most of his spare time studying cinema.

In 1977, he happened to watch *Red Detachment of Women*, directed by Xie Jin in 1961. The film influenced him to learn more about Chinese films and make cinema his career.

From 1980 to 1994, Mueller's collaborations with Venice included consulting on Chinese and Asian films, which led to directors like Zhang Yimou, Hou Xiaoxian and Cai Mingliang winning Golden Lion awards. He also organized the first major retrospective of Chinese films in the West in 1982, called *Electric Shadows*, in Turin, Milan and Rome.

Mueller has written extensively about Chinese films, and since the 1990s, he has co-financed and co-produced Chinese independent films.

Mueller is so well known in China's film industry that at the centennial celebration of Chinese films, held in Beijing in 2005, he was seated at the president's table alongside filmmakers from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Mueller said that during the past 30 years, the Venice Film Festival has systematically worked to offer Chinese filmmakers unprecedented visibility and help them penetrate

the international market. Their efforts have been greatly bolstered by the many awards won by filmmakers like Zhang, Hou, Cai, Ang Lee, Jia Zhangke and Jiang Wen.

"I watched Jiang Wen's current on-screen film, *Let the Bullets Fly*, in Beijing. Though I only saw about 25 minutes of it, I dare say, 'The oriental sky is red for sunrise, China's film world is red for Jiang Wen,'" Mueller joked.

He said Jiang was like the famous Italian director Federico Fellini, whose works prospered during the 1960s and '70s by creating a brand new type of comedy that was distinctly Italian.

"Jiang has created a brand new genre for Chinese films," Mueller said. "Genre films are applauded in every market, whether North American or European."

Mueller talked about the need for Chinese films to properly package themselves to the world.

"All in all, film is an industry. Any products, especially non-mainstream ones, need proper wrappings and promotion before going to the global market," he said. "Commercial operation is what Chinese filmmakers need to learn most."

## American donates time, money and career to welfare of China's adolescents

By Li Zhixin

Julian Taplin, an American psychologist praised by many for his devotion to the well being of Chinese children and teenagers, recently published his latest book, *In My Previous Life, I Was a Chinese*.

The 73-year-old was involved in juvenile psychology in the US for more than 40 years. In 1998, when the UN asked him to conduct a survey of psychological health in developing countries, he chose China, where his daughter was studying at West China Medical University in Sichuan Province.

Taplin became the visiting professor of the Sichuan Academy of Social Sciences and then conducted a series of research projects with the help of the academy.

"The country's rapid development has brought Chinese families and children great benefits, but also many problems," Taplin said. "Children now live in a society that is strongly commerce-oriented. Mass media is full of violence, sex and lust, conveying values of quick success and instant benefit."

"Anything that helps young people get on the right track is meaningful."



Julian Taplin has devoted himself to children's mental health.

Photo provided by Julian Taplin

Taplin has held hundreds of lectures and consultation meetings for Chinese parents, teachers and children. He is very supportive of Chinese traditional cultural and educational values. "Chinese traditional culture has already provided good solutions for people to balance relationships and control lust," he said.

Taplin wrote several books

to guide Chinese parents. He has donated his royalty to Youai Hope School in Daping, Sichuan Province.

When Taplin first visited Daping village in 2005, he was stunned by the poor state of Youai Hope School. "There were less than 50 students there. The so-called school was just a deserted temple with only two

rooms with dozens of broken desks," he said.

To make sure these students could get better education, he decided to fund the school. He even mobilized his relatives and friends to join him in raising money. Many others have donated equipment and asked him to take it to the school.

The school was completed

in 2006 with a library, dining room and dormitory. It now has more than 200 students.

Taplin visits the school every year when he comes to China and spends at least one week with the children to teach them English and about mental health. As he writes in his new book, he has a sense of belonging in China.



# Japanese ambassador concludes Nanjing visit

Japan's ambassador to China, Uichiro Niwa, finished a three-day visit to Nanjing, Jiangsu Province on Wednesday, and made a trip to its memorial commemorating one of the worst massacres of the 20th century.

Niwa, former president of the Japanese trading company Itochu Corp, arrived in Nanjing on Monday afternoon to meet Japanese entrepreneurs and local officials in a move that analysts said would help improve strained ties between China and Japan.

On Tuesday morning, Niwa met residents doing their morning exercises in the city's Xuanwu Lake Park and delivered a lecture at a foreign language school, according to the Japanese embassy.

The three-day trip, ostensibly to boost bilateral trade, is signif-

icant as it is Niwa's first visit to the city where more than 300,000 civilians were killed by Japanese troops between December 1937 and January 1938.

It is also significant because relations between the two nations have been strained after Japanese authorities detained the captain of a Chinese trawler and members of its crew in waters off Diaoyu Islands in September.

Japan's *Kyodo News* reported on Monday that Niwa's visit shows relations between the two countries "are getting better."

During the visit, Niwa said that China and Japan are like a couple that cannot bear to be separated.

"We have no choice but to keep friendly ties," Niwa said. "And I come to Nanjing in that spirit."

(By Han Manman)



Uichiro Niwa is visiting a factory in Nanjing.

IC Photo

## Embassy warns US citizens to avoid Club Latte, be careful in bars

By Han Manman

US citizens in Beijing are advised to exercise more caution when going to bars and nightclubs in the city, according to a statement posted on the US embassy's website on Friday.

The embassy has received several reports in recent weeks about the unprovoked harassment of US citizens, including two incidents that occurred at Club Latte near Workers Stadium, US embassy press officer Lydia R. Goldfine said.

Goldfine said most of the recent incidents began as disputes over small matters, such as spilled drinks or misinterpreted laughter, then developed into serious altercations resulting in injuries.

In light of these incidents, the US embassy has advised US citizens, especially government personnel, to avoid Club Latte.

The embassy has also provided some safety tips for citizens.

"Pay attention to surroundings. If you feel unsafe or believe that other bar or club patrons or staff wish you ill, leave. Don't stick around on principle," Goldfine said.

"When going to bars and clubs, go with other people," she said.



Many disputes between foreigners and Chinese in bars are caused by misunderstanding. CFP Photo

"If you want to go to a new bar or club, learn about it first. English publications geared to the expatriate community may have information about recent criminal incidents," she said.

However, an employee at Club Latte who refused to be named said he did not hear any cases of violence or dis-

putes involving US citizens in his club recently.

Some of the disputes are caused by misunderstandings due to language differences, the employee said, adding that for serious cases, the bar will call the police.

"Foreign customers receive the same treatment as local

guests," the employee said. He insisted there was no discrimination and said he thinks the embassy overreacted.

According to Goldfine, the US embassy can be reached at any time. During business hours, call 8531 4000. For after-hour emergencies or on weekends, call 8531 3000.

## Australia eases visa application process for Chinese citizens

By Han Manman

The Australian government announced a relaxation of its visa policy this week and enacted a new set of measures for students from China and India.

Australia has seen a severe decline in the number of international students from these two countries, as Australian student visa requirements are more rigorous than those from other countries, the Australian embassy in Beijing said.

Chris Evans, Australia's minister of Tertiary Education, said his country's international education sector has come under increasing pressure as a result of the rising value of the Australian dollar, the ongoing impact of the global financial crisis in some countries and growing competition from the US, New Zealand and Canada for international students.

"That's why the government is commissioning a strategic review of the student visa program, which will give education providers and stakeholders an important opportunity to share their vision of the sector's future," he said.

The new changes would mean Chinese students now need to demonstrate lesser funds in order to obtain the student visa for the higher education sector, he said.

For all student visa applications starting April 1 2011, students will need to show funds for only two years of study instead of the currently required three years. Moreover, such funds need to be only three months old instead of six months.

The student can only be sponsored by family members, though.

The policy change has already made Chinese students reconsider Australia as a destination.

Zhang Zhiheng, 21, plans on studying abroad next year, but hasn't decided on a location. "I wanted to go to Australia, but the cost of education there is equal to that in the US," she said. She added that while the US and Canada have opened their doors to foreign students, Australia seemed to be more stringent about its requirements.

"But the Australian government's new move is good news for me. I will reconsider my study plans now," Zhang said.

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# Youth program explores hutong cultural diversity

By Liang Meilan

Although Nanluogu Xiang is widely explored by expats and locals alike, there are indeed some places there that remain under the radar.

Last weekend, the Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center (CHP), an NGO dedicated to preserving buildings in old blocks and various kinds of cultural heritage, ushered 20 young people down less-traveled yet well-preserved alleys of Nanluogu Xiang as part of a UNESCO-authorized exchange program that aims to raise awareness among youth about the need to protect cultural heritage and ensure cultural diversity.

A close observation of Qintangfu Courtyard No. 7, the renovated guesthouse of a former dignitary during the Qing Dynasty (1616-1911), located at Qiangulouyuan Hutong, was included in the program. A detailed history of the courtyard and its renovation was told by its owner, Ren Wei.

Ren said the highlight of the courtyard, which was built during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), is the *sifeng* (thread-like interstice) brick-work technique that has long been abandoned by carpenters.

Juerhutong 41 Courtyard was another destination. Zhang Pei, CHP program manager, told the participants that the courtyard used to be a common traditional courtyard with one-story houses. Wu Liangyong, architect professor at Tsinghua University, redesigned it in 1989 into a modern courtyard with two-story buildings equipped with draining systems, turning it into a livable residential compound.

It was an experimental project for finding feasible approaches to preserving an old courtyard.



Young people taking part in CHP's cultural heritage program in Nanluogu Xiang. Photo by Liu Xiaoxiao

"Traditional features like rooftops and windows were kept in the designs," Zhang said.

For unknown reasons, the preservation idea and technique were not adopted in other homes.

"But it is really a feasible alternative for restoring courtyards and one-story houses in hutong, rather than demolishing them," Zhang said.

For Lumir Gan, a 23-year-old editor in Beijing, the program fed her curiosity about what was authentic on Nanluogu Xiang.

"I feel lucky because it is a rare chance for either locals or foreigners to have an overall observation of the houses seated deeply in old hutong," Gan said. "It is quite different from European countries like the UK and France, famous for their great abundance of aged buildings where visitors can get free detailed introductory handbooks and stories about all of them. In Beijing, only hotspots

provide brief introductions."

The group also gathered in front of the yet-to-be-opened Keyuan, a southern-China-style garden in Mao'er Hutong.

Though listed as an important heritage site under state protection in 2001, Keyuan faced demolition in 2008.

"CHP brought the public and media together and put pressure on related departments so that demolition was replaced by renovation," Zhang said. "But the renovation plan is still in its drafting phase."

CHP released a statement saying it hopes the renovation of Keyuan can be opened to public discussion. "To ensure its lawfulness and professionalism, the renovation must be in compliance with the Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics and should be supervised by the State Cultural Relic Bureau," it read.

Participants had a unique experience at the Old Object Exhibition

Hall at Lingdang Hutong near the Drum and Bell Tower when they got to see ancient wares like *dou*, a scale for weighing rice and flour, and *sancunjinlian*, the little shoes used for foot-binding.

"It is amazing that ancient people were so creative and made a pan-shaped oven with small holes in it to bake leftover grain," Gan said. "We should learn from their thriftiness and be motivated by needs in daily lives."

In the brainstorming session of the program, Andreanne Laverdiere, a 23-year-old Canadian student studying international politics at Renmin University, said increasing the quality of life of hutong residents is the best way to preserve the old houses, as it will ensure people will actually want to live there.

"I also think that to enact a bicycle-only policy in the hutong would be a good way to protect the environment," she said.

## Christmas party for pets and their owners



The International Center for Veterinary Services hosted a Christmas party for pets and their owners on December 11. More than 70 people attended, raising 600 yuan for the center's non-profit neuter-and-return program for cats. The program aims to spay and neuter stray cats in the community, an effective and humane way to control their population. (By Wei Ying)

Photo provided by Mary Peng

## Event

### Clap and stomp at flamenco class

Casa Flamenco, a flamenco dance, guitar and Spanish language studio located in CBD, is providing flamenco dance courses, taught in Spanish and English, for all levels of dancers. Students will learn how to clap their palms and stomp their feet to guitar and cajon accompaniment. Instructors will adopt a novel teaching tool for students to learn the 12-beat rhythm of flamenco.

Where: Casa Flamenco, 11-1-14, Qijiayuan Diplomatic Residence Compound, 9 Jianwai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: Every Sunday until January 2, 2011, 2-7 pm

Tel: 13910914251

Cost: 100 yuan per hour

### Art fundraiser for rural minority children

Photographers Daniel Finn and Hank Klein are teaming up to present an exhibition of photography from places around China. These pictures, taken during the last seven years, are part of a cultural exchange project. The photographers hope the exhibition, *Beholding the Dragon*, can raise money for Spring Festival Art Camp in Ruili, Yunnan Province for Jingpo minority children. All proceeds from food and drinks go to the camp.

Where: Yes Bar, 55 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: Until December 31, 8 pm - 3 am

Tel: 131 4675 1815

Cost: Free

### Big Christmas day event at Sunny Kids Garden

Sunny Kids Garden, a new day care for local and expat children, is organizing its first big event on Christmas day. Activities for children of all ages include singing traditional Christmas tunes, making Christmas crafts, painting and watching a magic show.

Where: Sunny Kids Garden campus, Building 302, Wangjingxiangsong Community, 103 Nan Huxiyuan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 25, 9:30 am - 6:30 pm

Tel: 13501215404

Cost: Free

### Christmas movie screening

Counting down the last days of the year with a movie marathon may be a superb choice for people tired of noisy drinking parties. Movies like *Bridget Jones's Diary*, *Nothing Like the Holidays*, *Thomas Kinkadee's Home for Christmas*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Home Alone 2* will be shown from December 26 to 30.

Where: Bed Bar, 17 Zhangwang Hutong, Xicheng District

When: December 26-30, 20 - 22 pm

Tel: 8400 1554

Cost: Free to attend

(By Liang Meilan)



# BDA bus to airport soon to be operational

By Zhao Hongyi

Residents and workers in the Beijing Economic Technological Development Area (BDA) will have access to a shuttle bus starting December 28 that, for the first time, will go to Beijing Capital International Airport.

The BDA is a national-priority development area in east Beijing was founded in 1991.

The route has been under consideration since 2009 and was warmly received by people working in the area.

The application was approved by the Municipal Transportation and Communication Committee this month. Civil aviation company Anle will operate the route.

Anle will assign 15 Kinglong buses to the line, four of which will be for emergency use. It will take about 90 minutes to get from Yizhuang, where BDA is located, to the airport.

"Our route is designed to be a two-way line," Li Peng, general manager of Anle, said. "It is also named the Yizhuang route and stops at Tongma Lu and



Shuttle buses will go from the Beijing Economic Technological Development Area to Beijing Capital Airport starting next week.  
Zhang Kaixin/CFP Photo

west of Jiukeshu, where it connects with the route from Tongzhou to the airport."

"We have been waiting for this route for a long time," said Yuan Yuan, who works at a multinational company in BDA. "I used to need two hours [to get to the airport] by subway, from Line 10 to Line 2 and then the Airport Express."

Yuan Yuan often goes to Shanghai to see her family. "It costs me nearly 200 yuan to call a taxi," she said.

In BDA, the route has two stops: at Beihuan Xi Lu (close to Huaguan Supermarket) and Rongjing Dong Jie (same stop as the light rail).

**Stops:** Airport East, Litian

Lu, 201 Tongshun Lu, Tongzhou, Tongzhou-Yanshan Express, Xinhua Bei Lu, Beiyuan Lu, Yizhuang Lu, Rongjing Dong Jie

**From BDA to the airport:** 5:30 am – 6:30 pm, every 30 minutes

**From airport to BDA:** 7 am – midnight, every 30 minutes

**Price:** 16 yuan each way

## New Mandarin test assesses oral, spoken proficiency

By Annie Wei

The Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK), a standardized reading and writing test taken by millions of people since its inception in 1990, is something for which many foreigners study.

But assessing listening and speaking skills is important as well. Enter HKC – hanyu kouyu ceshi – introduced in November at Beijing Union University and taken by 32 students from South Korea, Peru and Russia.

There are nine levels to this computerized exam. Passing Level 3 means one can have basic daily conversations in Chinese and can live, study and work in China. Those who pass up to Level 6 can communicate in Chinese easily and can discuss more intense topics like finance. Those who are in Levels 7 to 9 can express themselves clearly and have a certain level of knowledge about Chinese politics, economics and culture.

Foreign students who want to attend local universities can use HKC as a reference. The original price of the HKC was 1,200 yuan, but there is currently a promotion that has cut the price to 380 yuan.

Those interested should visit Chinahkc.net.

**Tianjin Language Testing and Training Center**

Where: 43 Gongyuan Xi Lu, Nankai District, TianjinTel: 022-2362 7628



Beijing hosted its first spoken Chinese proficiency test in November.  
Yang Hongbin /CFP Photo

### ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: [weiyang@ynet.com](mailto:weiyang@ynet.com)

**Can I use my Bank of China debit card to withdraw money from ATMs or banks in the US?**

Most ATMs in the US accept Chinese debit cards – just find one with the China UnionPay logo. Visit [en.chinaunionpay.com](http://en.chinaunionpay.com) for more information.

**Do you know where I can buy jigsaw puzzles? I went to a department store last week, but the nice ones were too expensive, like more than 500 yuan.**

You can find some on the 4th floor of Yashow Market. You can also try other wholesale shopping malls, like Beijing Hongqiao Tianle Toys Market (136 Fashuasi, Chongwen District, tel: 6711 7499, open 8:30 am – 7 pm) or Wantong Dasha (2 Fuchengmen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District, tel: 6805 3731, open: 8 am – 7 pm).

**When the weather got chilly last week, a friend gave me something called nuanbaobao, a pad that contains some chemicals and generates heat after being exposed to the air. When I used the pad, my skin turned red. My friend said the pad was popular among young Chinese women who prefer to wear less during the winter, and that the pad is safe. Is that true?**

It is popular among Chinese women who spend lots of time outdoors. But don't apply the pad directly to your skin for too long because the pad generates heat that's hotter than your average body temperature. It's a practical tool when you use it wisely.

(By Wei Ying)

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# Life's first

## The adventure of the world's



*Ponijao lives in Namibia with her parents and eight older brothers and sisters, part of the Himba tribe.*

**“I was  
and Af  
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**W**ith no narration, explanatory text or conventional narrative structure, the film portrays the first year of four infants' lives in Namibia, Mongolia, Japan and the US in 79 minutes.

The only accompaniment is a musical score by Bruno Coulais.

The film begins the moment Ponijao discovers he can pound red clay from the dirt by hitting it with a pile of rocks in her African village. Ponijao lives in Namibia with her family – her parents and eight older brothers and sisters – as part of the Himba tribe.

In San Francisco, Hattie bounces about on a swing as her parents prepare her meals, take her to play groups and spend time with her around the house.

The third baby, Mari, has a quick temper and lives with her affluent parents in the lavish Shibuya, one of Tokyo's most bustling metropolitan areas. Mari is an only child.

The last baby, Bayarjargal, stares at a rooster standing by his bedside. He lives with his parents and older brother on a small family farm.

These four babies are nurtured and cared for by parents under the cultural norms of their countries.

While Hattie and Mari shower with their parents, Bayarjargal is left to sit in a basin – joined only by a thirsty goat that his mother is quick to shoo away. Ponijao's mother cleans her by licking.

Having and raising a child is a universal experience whether one lives on a plain or in an urban apartment. Parents respond in much the same manner to their babies, and babies act and react with striking similarity.

When one baby plays with an older sibling, the sibling always bullies the younger child and makes it cry. The child throws its toys when it feels frustrated.

“The film shows the universality of children's development paths,” Balmès says.

The 40-year-old director has a passion for serious topics. His past documentaries have focused on the mad cow crisis in India, life inside a Nokia plant in China and the lives of UN peacekeepers in Bosnia.

*Babies* is nothing short of a radical departure.

In 2005, producer Alain Chabat pitched the idea to Balmès. The original plan was to make a baby music video that would follow the infants for three years.

After several conversations with the producer, Balmès had a different vision – a documentary of the babies' development.

But they never expected how complex that would be.

Their first step was to narrow down a list of possible locations. “I was looking for a variety, not a social and economic variety, but one in terms of the general environment,” Balmès says.

Eventually, they chose the plains of Namibia, the grasslands of Mongolia, the skyscrapers of Tokyo and a garden apartment in San Francisco.

“I don't want people to think this is a comparison between Western and Eastern ways of life. The choices I made were much more specifically about each family and its relationship with the modern world,” he said.

After deciding on locations, he and his crew started to pick candidate families. They interviewed 15 to 20 families in each country.

Since 2007, Balmès and his crew have traveled back and forth between the countries to film the four infants.

Balmès shoots them at their height, close to the ground, showing them discovering themselves and the environments they inhabit as they begin to talk and walk. “These babies were born with cameras observing them, though they didn't acknowledge the camera's presence,” he said.

Often he spent two or three weeks waiting for one shot. “It takes time to make a good documentary, no matter what the subject is,” he said. “Steven James' *Hoop Dreams*, a film about basketball players, took five years to film. That is the dedication it takes to get good footage.”

After collecting almost 400 hours of raw footage, they began the arduous editing process. Balmès spent the second two years of the project cutting.

Knowing that the film would be released internationally with only one version, he had to make a version that would suit every audience.

“We needed the images to speak for themselves. What I was really looking for were the ‘accidents,’ like the first time the baby established a connection with his environment,” he said.

Most of the editing was done in the first year. It took a long time for him to find the right musician for the score. “We needed to find a kind of music that would not take up much space, and would be unobtrusive,” Balmès said.

In the end, he settled on Coulais, who composed for the 2001 documentary *Winged Migration* and the 2009 American stop-motion 3D film *Coraline*.

Balmès says he hopes the film can be a lesson to many Western parents whose kids grow up with toys filling every moment of their childhood.

“I was amazed how the Mongolian and African babies could develop a relationship with a fly, a goat or a piece of grass,” he said. “They are not poor. It's just a different type of wealth, because in Namibia and Mongolia, they measure wealth by cattle.”





# steps

## s children

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frican babies could develop a  
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easure wealth by cattle.”

By He Jianwei

Everything is a great adventure for a newborn, but it's an adventure soon forgotten unless someone is recording it.

French filmmaker Thomas Balmes spent 400 days capturing the lives of four infants born in different societies. Balmes says babies are the same, whether they are growing up surrounded by dirt and grass or modern housing.

His documentary, *Babies*, was the opening film at the second iDOCS International Documentary Festival in Beijing on December 11 at the Beijing Film Academy.



Bayarjargal lives with his parents and older brother on a small family farm.

Photos provided by iDOCS

**“I don’t want people to think this is a comparison between Western and Eastern ways of life. The choices I made were much more specifically about each family and its relationship with the modern world.”**

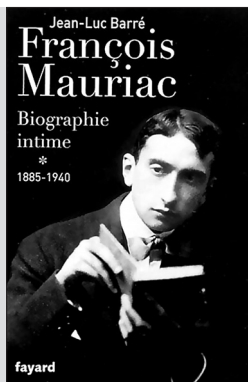
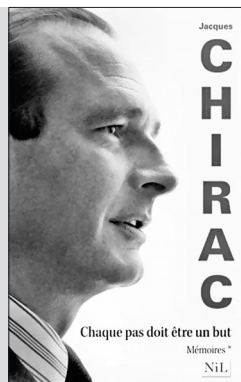
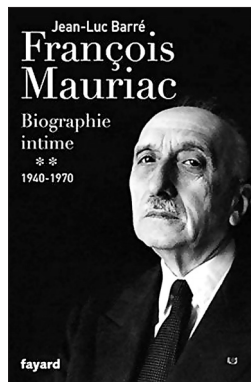


Mari lives with her affluent parents in the lavish Shibuya, one of Tokyo's most bustling metropolitan areas.



# A foundation of truth

## French author talks about the importance of biography



“Everyone wears a mask. The task for a biographer is to lift the mask and uncover the truth.”

— French biographer Jean-Luc Barre

By He Jianwei

Greek historian Plutarch, regarded as the father of biography, once summed up the need for the genre: “The first impulse to write biography arose from the moral desire to hold up for public example the lives and characters of illustrious persons in order to extol the virtues to be emulated and the vices to be eschewed.”

But French biographer Jean-Luc Barre says truthfulness is the foundation of biography.

“I write biographies not to praise or depreciate the person. I try to reveal the person’s life and his or her nature, both good and evil. Facts are what make it biography,” Barre says.

The journalist and historian visited Beijing earlier this month. Barre’s latest achievement was being co-author of the former French President Jacques Chirac’s memoir.

The first volume was published in October. Titled *Each Step Should be a Goal*, the book spans the 77-year-old leader’s life from childhood to his election in 1995.

Volume two, to be released later, will cover his two terms in office, spanning 1995 until he relinquished power to his successor, Nicholas Sarkozy, in 2007.

The memoir tries to present a complete image of Chirac. “I was told I could say what I wanted to say. He promised me that I could ask every question I was interested in,” Barre says.

Chirac does not skirt around his family’s skeletons, baring his

involvement in a love triangle during his years at Harvard Business School.

When he studied political science at the Paris Institute of Political Studies in 1951, Chirac met Bernadette Chodron de Courcel, his future wife. They fell in love at first sight, but Bernadette’s parents disapproved, at first, because Chirac was born into an ordinary family and their daughter was an aristocrat.

When he won a scholarship to study at Harvard Business School, he fell in love with an American student and they almost wed. But both parents opposed, forcing Chirac to break up with her and return to France in 1953.

A few months later, he became engaged with Bernadette and they married in 1956.

They had two daughters, Laurence and Claude Chirac. The younger daughter was Chirac’s assistant in political life, but the older daughter has never appeared with the family members in public.

In the book, Chirac discussed much about Laurence, who became anorexic at 15. She tried to commit suicide many times, and Chirac was forced to hire a team of nurses to watch her constantly.

Doctors said her anorexia was a response to her relationship with Chirac, something he bitterly blames himself for. “I didn’t spend enough time with her during her childhood. Maybe that was the reason she felt disappointed? It was thoughtless and



Photo provided by French Embassy

didn’t realize [I was neglecting her] at the time.”

“As a biographer, my profession is to tell the person’s story honestly and I do not make value judgments,” Barre says.

Among Barre’s books, the most controversial is *This Was François Mauriac*, a biography of a Catholic novelist and 1952 Nobel Prize in Literature laureate.

The first volume of the book, published last year, covers the childhood and early career of Mauriac from 1885 to 1940. And the second volume, from 1940 to 1970, was published this year.

The most controversial aspect of the biography is Mauriac’s

alleged homosexuality. Barre thought it was central to readers’ understanding of the man and his writings.

“Mauriac was a master of French literature. When I disclosed this information in the book, everyone was shocked — especially the government. He had a glorious family: he was the father of writer Claude Mauriac and the grandfather of Anne Wiazemsky, a French actress and author who worked with and married French director Jean-Luc Godard,” he says. “I was also surprised when I got this secret.”

Barre had a contract with Mauriac’s son, Jean, who pro-

vided Mauriac’s personal letters and diaries to him. Reading the letters, Barre found that Mauriac had an intimate relationship with the poet Jean Cocteau.

“Their letters read like love letters. Jean confirmed my suspicions. He told me his father had homosexual tendencies that he felt he had to hide for religious and family reasons,” Barre says. “It is understandable that he feared he would lose his reputation if the secret got out.”

“Everyone wears a mask. The task for a biographer is to lift the mask and uncover the truth,” he says.

## Trends Lounge book listing

Located at The Place, Trends Lounge is a bookstore and cafe with a wide selection of international art, design and architecture books.

**Sebastiao Salgado**

By Sebastiao Salgado and Christian Caujolle, 144pp, Gardners Books, 116 yuan

This is Brazilian photographer Salgado’s Photofile series featuring images of the Sahel famine and his colossal project, which was awarded the first annual prize for distinguished photographic books by the International Center of Photography.

**New London Style**

By Chloe Grimshaw and

Ingrid Rasmussen, 224pp,

Thames & Hudson, 259 yuan

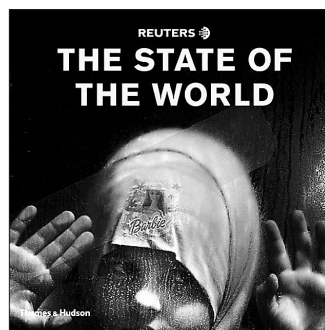
This book is a peek into the private dwellings of London’s most exciting young talents from the worlds of music, fashion, design and art. The 28 houses are in the grooviest neighborhoods from Shoreditch to Notting Hill, Clerkenwell to Clerkenwell. Grimshaw writes on style and interiors and Rasmussen takes the photos.

**Reuters: The State of the World**

Edited by Reuters, 384pp,

W. W. Norton, 324 yuan

Drawing on the resources of the world’s largest interna-



tional text and television news agency, this book explores the questions all humans ask: What roles do religion and our deepest beliefs play in contemporary life? What lifestyles are



we adopting in an increasingly technological world? What is the balance of power and the balance of trade? What is the pattern of war and peace? What are the issues facing local



and regional communities, and what issues must we confront on a global scale? What do we remember about our past and how do we see our future?

(By He Jianwei)



# Graffiti artists spray paint for Earth

15

Trend

By Wang Yu

It's been at least a decade since graffiti was imported as an underground culture. While the original style of street signatures is forbidden and quickly washed away, artists have found other ways to make their work last by cooperating with commercial brands.

But under such conditions, what artists can paint is limited by their contract, and native artists rarely coordinate to work together.

That is why the event happening now at Sanlitun SOHO is so remarkable. More than 50 graffiti artists and illustrators, brought together by a local graffiti team, have been given free reign to practice their trade and protect the environment.

## Underground exhibition

A new community of office buildings, shopping malls and apartments sits opposite the crowded Sanlitun Village. While many of its stores have been open for several months, the area remains in the shadow of its popular neighbor.

But December 10 drew a new flood of young people to its basement. Armed with hoodies and cans of spray paint, they came for *More Than Show*, an exhibition of graffiti paintings, hip-hop parties and movie screenings that will continue through January.

The event is organized by ABS crew, one of the most reputable graffiti artist unions in Beijing. The exhibition on the basement of Sanlitun SOHO has been lavishly decorated. The floor is covered in grass and BMW dealers donated three Mini Coopers for the artists to vandalize.

Rather than encouraging painting on the walls, Sanlitun SOHO put up large, bright sheets of canvas on which the graffiti work can be preserved. There are also hand-painted illustrations of skateboards done in the style of the band Guns 'n' Roses.

The event has drawn some of the top overseas artists, like eBoy, the pixel art team from the US.

The biggest painting is a 5-meter high canvas graffiti made by ABS crew. It took three artists three days to finish the picture of a man surrounded by skulls splitting open the canvas with a chainsaw. The sky in the image is red and the tags are green and blue. The colors represent the environment being polluted.

*This huge graffiti piece represents three days of ABS crew's effort.*



Artists meet to create art in the parking lot.

## Painting together

But for graffiti lovers, the real excitement is on Floor B2. A corner of the parking lot is sectioned off by a canvas where more than 20 artists from all over the world met to create a huge series of paintings over three days. The piece, called "Meeting Neighborhood," received contributions from big names like JNJ Crew from Korea and Broken Fingaz from Israel.

"This event marked the first time that Ironlak, the most popular spray paint brand in the world, brought its product series to Asia. We are proud of that," says Chen Chuang, an artist on ABS Crew.

Two months ago, the team began preparing for *More Than Show*. Before that,



Chen participated in similar events throughout China, but none managed to gather China's top names in graffiti – let alone the artists from abroad.

"Money was always the biggest problem. It's not hard to find sponsors, but usually they asked us to follow too many rules. ABS crew compromised to cooperate with many commercial brands in the past, but this time we wanted the event to be pure," Chen says.

Eventually a design studio agreed to sponsor the event – no strings attached.

Organizing the event involved negotiating with relevant government departments to get a license to do indoor graffiti. While they reached an agreement, the three Mini Coopers were forbidden from street display by the urban management bureau.

That did not affect the artists' passion for their work. As in ABS crew's over-sized painting, all the artists were asked to use green, blue, red and purple to illustrate the relationship between nature and pollution.

Most Asian teams such as JNJ crew and Kwanyin tended to paint cartoon figures while artists from Spain and Germany were more traditional.

Some might be quick to point out that spray paint itself is not eco-friendly. But graffiti artists are not radical environmentalists. The participants say graffiti can spread the

## Lack of collectors

There were so many visitors during the first four days that the expensive indoor grass was reduced to sand.

Last Saturday night, a free underground hip-hop party was held in the parking area after the artists finished their works on the canvas. A corner of the venue was turned into a DJ's stage. With no seats, the organizers hoped to recreate the street party atmosphere that inspired early painters.

With the work complete, the organizers have a new problem: finding a home for the paintings.

SOHO has no interest in keeping the large canvas, and no museums or collectors have



Photos provided by More Than Show



idea more efficiently to young people.

"I know it's kind of ironic. But [spray paint] is the only way for us to express our ideas. Besides it was the first time that so many good artists created a series together. I think the sum of their works is worth more than any damage the spray paint did," Chen says.

voiced an interest in street art. In the US or Europe, the paintings would have been pre-sold even before the first artist picked up his can of spray paint.

"To us, this graffiti work means a lot and it's not something that can just be abandoned. Maybe in the end we'll have to cut it into pieces to save it in hopes of showing it one day in the future," Chen says.

"It's a shame that graffiti has no market China, but that is why we keep organizing these events. The scene is sure to expand as it gets more exposure."

Editor: Wang Yu Designer: Zhao Yan

BEIJING TODAY



# Stay warm and stylish this winter



Photos provided by Clinique

Clinique makeup platter, 420 yuan;  
eyelash, 210 yuan; lip gloss, 180 yuan

Strawberry fudge eyelashes are Clinique's latest product. They create a natural, sweet and young look. The eyelashes can be easily removed by warm water. The lip gloss contains vitamin C, Brazilian strawberry and pomegranate.

Where: 1st floor, The Pacific Plaza, 2, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm  
Tel: 6538 3888



Photo provided by Suvius

Suvius aloe  
cream, 520  
yuan for 30  
grams

Aloe can help dry skin, especially in the winter.

Where: Shin Kong Place, 87 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm  
Tel: 6530 5888



Juice beauty mist,  
220 yuan for 200  
milliliters

This mist is rich in vitamins and pleasant essential oil aromas. Spray it over your face after washing in the morning and massage for 30 seconds, then use a tissue to wipe it off. You can use it frequently in the office.

Where: Shin Kong Place, 87 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm  
Tel: 6530 5888

Photo provided by Juicy Beauty

By Annie Wei

The advantages of a snow-less winter are obvious: you do not need to dress up in bag-like coveralls. You can mix and match items like fishnet stockings with motorcycle boots, or wear fur vests that show off the shoulders. You can re-use those sexy evening dresses you've prepared for Christmas and New Year's Eve parties.

But on the flip side, the dry cold might make your nose dry and skin itchy, and your face might start peeling. If this happens to you, it means you need to update your skin care products.

*Beijing Today* recommends a small collection from local designer Vega Wang's new arrivals: moisturizers for both men and women, as well as the latest cosmetics.



Photos provided by Xiangyi Bencao

Herbal lotion for him (34 yuan for 120 grams) and wash-free mask for her (89 yuan for 70 grams)

This Shanghai brand uses many Chinese herbs to help balance the amount of water and oil on the face so that it achieves maximum smoothness.

Where: Watson's, B1, The Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Laneige renew sleeping treatment,  
385 yuan for 40 milliliters of cream  
and 10 grams of powder

For office women who are too busy to spend time in beauty salons, the sleeping treatment is an ideal option. After showering and before going to bed, apply a layer of the sleeping treatment. Wash it off the next morning and marvel at how fine your skin looks.

Where: 1st floor, The Pacific Plaza, 2, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm  
Tel: 6538 3888



Photo provided by Laneige

Blue cape,  
4,200 yuan

Capes are very popular this year. They've been written about on all the fashion blogs, and models in street fashion shoots all seem to sport them. Most capes come in black, red or beige. Local designer Vega Wang (vegazaishiwang.com), whose new collection includes dresses, scarves, trousers, offers capes that are blue and velvet red.

Where: Vega Wang, Boutique 662, B1, Jianwai Soho building 6, 39 Dong Sanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 1-8 pm  
Tel: 5900 2279

Photo provided by Vega Wang





# Established old restaurants in new locations

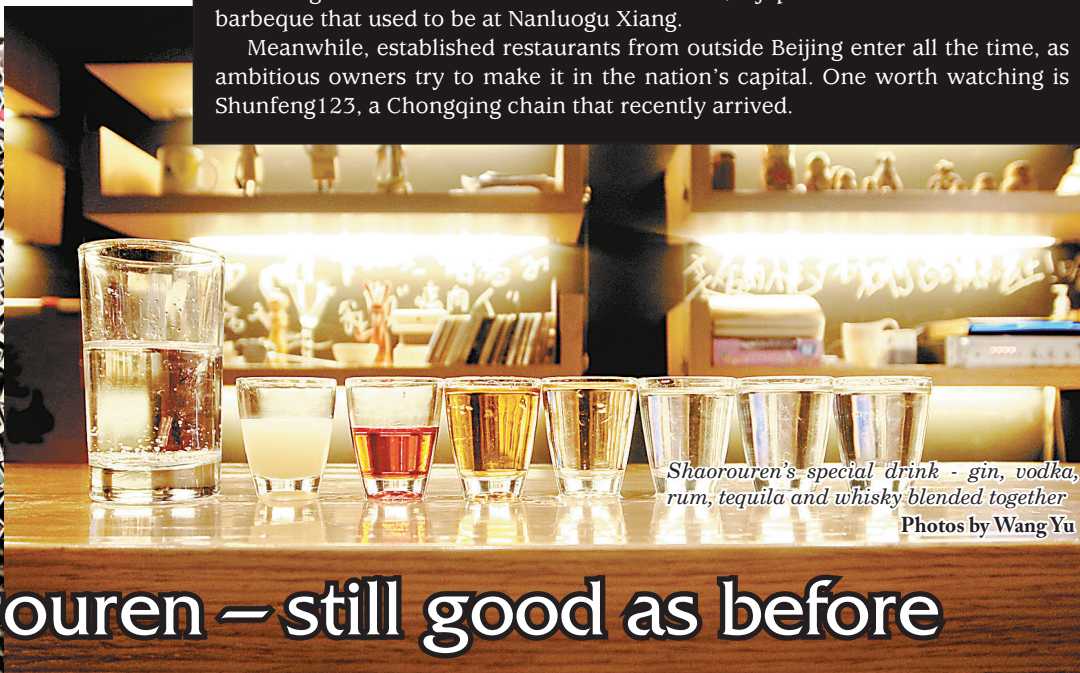
By Annie Wei

It's always disappointing when established restaurants relocate due to rent hikes. But when a restaurant is good, its loyal customers will follow no matter where it goes. Such is the case with Shaorouren, a Japanese and Taiwan fusion barbecue that used to be at Nanluogu Xiang.

Meanwhile, established restaurants from outside Beijing enter all the time, as ambitious owners try to make it in the nation's capital. One worth watching is Shunfeng123, a Chongqing chain that recently arrived.



Photos of diners' kissing adorn Shaorouren's wall.



Shaorouren's special drink - gin, vodka, rum, tequila and whisky blended together  
Photos by Wang Yu

## Shaorouren – still good as before

By Annie Wei

Shaorouren left its Nanluogu Xiang location last year because its landlord wanted to increase rent from 100,000 yuan a year to 600,000 yuan.

The restaurant had built a solid reputation over three years for its quality food and attention to detail, its good ambience, cool staff and fun promotions, like a free plate of beef tongues for any two diners who let themselves be photographed kissing for 10 seconds.

After a brief time away, Shaorouren opened in Sanlitun SOHO in October.

The restaurant is owned by a pair of brothers from Taiwan. Xu Junlin, 28, the younger has been the restaurant's chief chef since it opened in 2007.

Unlike other restaurants that overextend its dining hours, Shaorouren only serves dinner. The reason is simple. All

meat is freshly delivered and cut into the right size by hand. There simply isn't enough time to prepare ingredients for lunch. On busy days, Xu has to cut meat at least four hours in advance.

"Cutting meat by hand and by machine are different," Xu said. Only fresh meat is cut by hand; frozen meat, like the kind used for hotpots, are cut by machine.

Beijing Today recommends Shaorouren's water greens (25 yuan), which is mixed sliced cabbage, lettuce and crushed peanuts. The vegetables are frozen by ice and very crispy. It's a dish diners should eat quickly, as the vegetable go soft if left untended.

For grilled dishes, we recommend the sliced beef tongue (25 to 40 yuan), boneless short rib (48 yuan), pork (25 to 35 yuan), tenderloin (48 yuan) and pork belly (25 yuan).

All the beef dishes are juicy,

partly because Xu sprays freshly squeezed lemon juice on the meat. For the beef tongue, Xu grills only one side of it, keeping it very tender. The pork is from the neck and comes out with a chewy texture, like tuna.

Shaorouren's meat is prepared in the traditional Japanese barbecue way – not marinated as in Korean barbecue.

"You can really tell the meat's quality and flavor without the sauce," Xu said.

For specialties, we recommend the special pork large intestines (30 yuan), braised in a family recipe from Xu's mother and prepared in miso. It tastes tender and yummy. The restaurant will serve two free cold dishes that the chef makes himself – spicy cabbage and chicken liver. We love the liver because unlike most chicken liver from other places in town, here they taste like foie gras, served in

red pepper oil sauce.

Shaorouren has a famous drink called Anger (88 yuan), which is a mix of gin, vodka, rum, tequila and whisky. People can easily get drunk on this, especially on weekends when the restaurant is packed, the music is loud and everyone is happy.

Shaorouren is a popular place for couples to go on a date. Many boys use the beef tongue promotion as an excuse to kiss their girls. The restaurant will take two photos: one for the couple, and another for the wall, where kissers are memorialized forever.

### Shaorouren

Where: Sanlitun SOHO Mall B, Room 2203, Nan Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 5:30 pm – late; 11:30 pm is last call for food orders

Tel: 6403 7626

Cost: Average 120 yuan per person



Beef tenderloin, 48 yuan

## Shunfeng 123 – new Chongqing chain in town

Sichuan restaurants are popular in town, so much so that some Sichuan restaurants try to differentiate themselves by claiming an authentic "Chongqing flavor."

Many of these restaurants fail to deliver any real difference. But Shunfeng 123 is an exception. First opened in Chongqing more than a decade ago, it serves dishes that are big and bold, and in larger servings than one would typically find in a Sichuan restaurant.

Recommended dishes include the shaojiao shanpian (58 yuan):

### Shunfeng123

Where: West side of Workers Stadium, Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 11 pm

Tel: 6551 2123

Cost: Average 80 yuan per person

eel served in a hot stone bowl topped with chopped leek. The eel is fresh and tender, with strong hints of Chinese pepper.

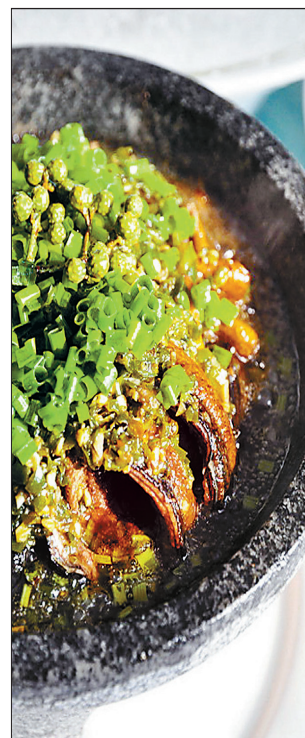
Shunfeng lengmianji (28 yuan) is cold noodle, chicken and sesame sauce. The noodle is cool and chewy, mixed with tender chicken pieces and a strong sesame flavor.

Other recommended dishes include sake fois gas (128 yuan) and spicy bullfrog (88 yuan).

The restaurant has attentive servers and a nice atmosphere.



Cold noodle, chicken and sesame sauce, 28 yuan



Eel in hot stone bowl, 58 yuan  
Photos provided by Shunfeng123

## Other known Chongqing cuisines

### Jinshancheng

A Chongqing restaurant chain that has been open for a decade in Beijing with many outlets.

Where: Floor 2, Zhongfu Dasha, 99 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10:30 am – 9:30 pm

Tel: 6581 6688

Cost: Average 30 yuan per person

### Shudao Jinsha Dajiulou

The restaurant in an antique-style building offers dishes in strong and spicy flavors.

Where: Floor 4, building A, Guoji Caijing Zhongxin, 87 Xisanhuan Zhong Lu, Haidian District

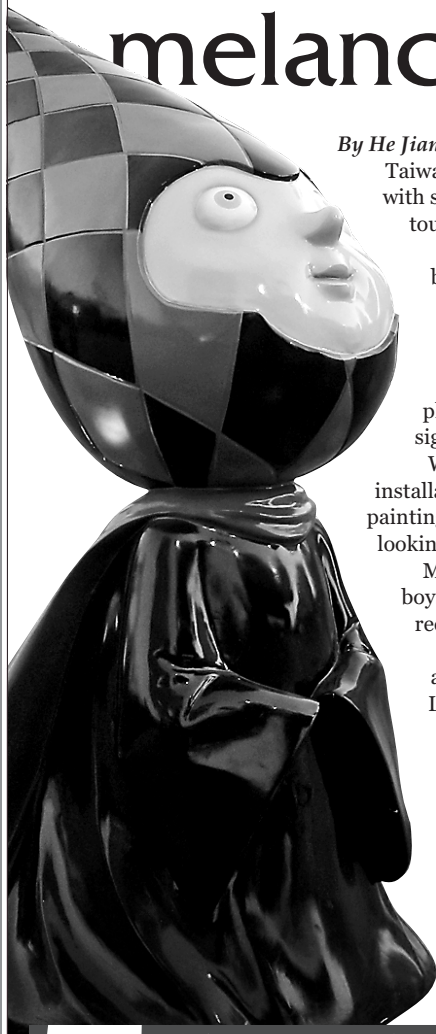
Open: 11 am – 9 pm

Tel: 8882 5086

Cost: Average 60 yuan per person



# Continued stories of melancholy adolescence



By He Jianwei

Taiwanese illustrator and author Jimmy Liao is famous for writing and illustrating books with simple stories about how people cope in the modern urban world. His drawings have touched the hearts of many young people by helping them relieve anxiety and pressure.

His most recent book, *The Starry, Starry Night*, published last year, is about the bittersweet experiences of growing up. In an exhibition that debuted at the Huashan Culture Park in Taipei last year, 14 artists from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Japan gave their interpretations of the story in installations drawn from their personal lives.

The exhibition arrived at Beijing's Sanlitun Village last Friday.

Each artist tells a warm but melancholy story based off scenes from Liao's book. Astro-physicist Sun Wei-hsin's installation, *Stars of Four Seasons*, displays LED-illuminated zodiac signs on the ceiling of the main hall with walls decorated with Liao's artworks.

Wax sculptor Lin Chien-cheng recreates the last page in *The Starry, Starry Night* with his installation named *Later, the Woman*, which displays a little girl looking at a Vincent Van Gogh painting; in the foreground is a wax sculpture of a woman wearing the same thing as the little girl, looking not at the painting but her past youth and memories.

Miniaturist Takuji Yamada made the installation *A Forgettable Afternoon*. A scene of four boys bullying the main character in *The Starry, Starry Night* was Yamada's inspiration. Yamada recreates the scene and puts it on a classroom desk, showing the cruelty of adolescence.

Stage designer Huang I-ju's *A Labyrinth Blocked from Home* shows a discouraged girl and a disappointed boy weighed down by keys. The two characters are the main characters in Liao's book. They seem lost in a space cluttered with keys.

This installation symbolizes how young people who have gone astray must confront difficulties in their search for answers that are locked who-knows-where.

## The Starry, Starry Night

Where: The Orange Hall, Sanlitun Village, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 7, daily, 11 am – 9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8795 4556

Photo by Zhang Huan

## 5 Friday, December 24

### Movie Piglet's Big Movie (2003)

This American animated film is based on characters from Winnie-the-Pooh books. In this film, Piglet is ashamed of being small and goes to Hundred Acre Woods, where his friends have to find him and bring him home.

Where: Lady Book Saloon, 69 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6270 1928

### Nightlife Su Yang

Inspired by traditional Chinese music, the singer-songwriter releases his latest rock album, *Like the Grass*, today.

Where: Star Live, 3/F

Tango, 79 Heping Xi Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 60 yuan advance purchase, 80 yuan at the door,

VIP 180 yuan  
Tel: 6402 5080

### Exhibition



### Art from Europe: Bernd Schwarzer in Beijing

Born in former East Germany, the artist depicts issues such as the reunification of Germany in his oil paintings.

Where: Today Art Museum, Building 4, Pingod Community, 32 Baiziwang Lu, Chaoyang District  
When: Until December 28, daily, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students  
Tel: 5876 9804

## 6 Saturday, December 25

### Nightlife Liu Donghong & Sand

As vocalist, songwriter and guitarist, Liu

combines elements of rock and blues.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiadaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 50 yuan advance purchase, 60 yuan at the door

Tel: 6401 4611

### Exhibition Lao Pan's Spring Blossom and Autumn Harvest

Beijing-based artist Pan Dianquan's style highlights bold colors, painting spring and autumn nature scenes.

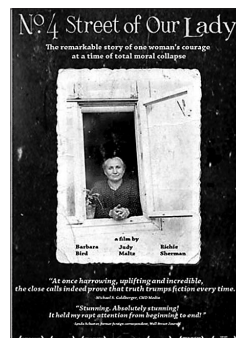
Where: XYZ Art Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 15, 2011, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9299

### Movie



### No. 4 Street of Our Lady (2009)

This documentary draws on excerpts from a diary kept by one of the survivors of World War II, about two families caught up in the Holocaust, one Jewish and one Christian.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

## Sunday, December 26

### Exhibition Reticence & Tranquility – Tong Zhengang Contemporary Art Exhibition

This exhibition shows 20 of Tong's oil paintings and wash paintings and prints, and 10 sculptures, about the information age.

Where: Yang Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until January 18, 2011, daily except Monday,

10:30 am – 7 pm  
Admission: Free  
Tel: 5762 3020

### Movie



### When Harry Met Sally... (1989)

This American romantic comedy film asks whether men and women can ever "just be friends."

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 4 pm

Admission: 35 yuan

Tel: 8229 6153

### Nightlife Good 4 Nothing

This Japanese punk band released its sixth album, *Back 4*

*Good*, in October.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 80 yuan advance purchase, 110 yuan at the door  
Tel: 6402 5080



## Upcoming

### Nightlife

#### Jose Carreras New Year's Concert

Carreras – one of The Three Tenors along with Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti – announced his retirement from opera earlier this year, saying he will only perform in solo concerts.

Where: Wukesong Arena, 69 Fuxing Lu, Haidian District

When: December 29, 7:30 pm

Admission: 380-1,680 yuan

Tel: 400 610 3721

## Stage in January

### Concert

#### Pinchas Zukerman and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 2, 7:30 pm

Admission: 280-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

#### Bamberg Symphony Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 3, 7:30 pm

Admission: 200-880 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

#### American Symphony Orchestra

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: January 4, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-880 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

### Dance

#### Nacho Duato's Choreography

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 13-15, 7:30 pm

Admission: 160-500 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

#### Madame Butterfly

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 13-16, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

#### Fuego! – Carmen Mota's First China Tour

Where: Beijing Exhibition Center Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: January 18-23, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,200 yuan

Tel: 5129 7260

### Drama

#### Lao She's Short Stories: Five Acts of Life

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 1-9, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

### Opera

#### Red Cliff

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: January 13-16, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-580 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)



# Winter tips for warm hands and feet

By Li Zhixin

Are your wool gloves becoming your latest permanent fashion accessory?

Medical experts said that half of all women are predisposed to feeling cold. Many women head to the hospital to see doctors about their cold hands and feet and related health problems during the winter.

## Icy hands not always caused by cold winter

Rianne Kassing, a customer service manager at an advertisement company, has been having cold hands and feet for more than half a year. This season, the condition worsened.

Kassing wears two or three pairs of socks even while in the house. She has started using feet and hand warmer pouches and stuffing them into her socks and gloves.

"I feel extremely fatigued all the time and have noticed a severe problem with my energy level. My mind feels foggy

and I have a hard time with memory and concentration," she said. "I'm only in my early 20s, so I know it's not an age issue. It just seems the cold hits me harder than others."

She never thought much of it despite all her friends telling her there had to be something wrong with her. However, recently she noticed her cuticles becoming red, inflamed and somewhat shiny.

"On a few fingers, I've developed a small sore in the area. I've also had some problems with small sections of skin on

my hands becoming extremely dry and itchy," she said.

She has had similar problems in the past and her doctor suggested thyroid dysfunction, but the tests always came back fine. "I feel like I'm crazy for thinking I'm sick. However, I know there's a problem and it's severely affecting my life," she said.

Liu Hongxu, director of the medical department at Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine, said cold hands and feet can affect people of any age. In older people, the condition can

indicate the onset of arteriosclerosis. In a younger people, the condition could be a sign of vasculitis, an inflammation of the blood vessels.

"Women during menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth and other special physiological periods are more prone to have cold hands and feet. The condition can make menstruation light or irregular, or could cause infertility," he said.

Prolonged coldness in the hands and feet during winter can make it easy to develop frostbite.

## Causes of the condition

Many people suffer from cold hands and feet throughout the year. If the discomfort is constant and bothersome, it might be a sign of more serious disorders, like poor circulation, thyroid dysfunction or iron deficiency. According to Chinese traditional medicine, cold hands and feet may be caused by one of the following conditions:

**1. Overactive autonomic nervous system.** The body may conserve its resources by channeling blood away from the extremities and toward the heart when under stress. Even if you don't think your life is stressful, your body may say otherwise. Activities like being stuck in traffic, running late for work, rushing through lunch or heading out for a night can trigger a stress response.

**2. Physical intolerance to cold combined with poor circulation.** As the temperature drops, some people develop a significant problem bearing

the cold. These people often have a difficult time staying warm even when wearing multiple layers. Symptoms can range from decreased blood flow in the extremities to flu-like symptoms. A person may experience fatigue, a runny nose, congestion, a cough or aches. These symptoms can persist all winter, resolving only when spring returns.

**3. Iron deficiency. Iron deficiency can cause a shortage of red blood cells.** Symptoms of iron deficiency-induced anemia include cold hands and feet, fatigue, pale skin, headache, shortness of breath, dizziness, unusual cravings and an irregular heartbeat. Causes include poor diet, blood loss, an inability to absorb iron and pregnancy.

**4. Weak thyroid.** Hypothyroidism is a condition that slows down your metabolism and your whole body. Low thyroid can cause sensitivity to cold, cold hands and feet, weight gain, fatigue, constipation, dry

skin, depression, hair loss, memory problems and immune system problems.

Cold hands and feet are also often associated with Raynaud's syndrome. People with the syndrome may experience pain or a stinging sensation in their hands and feet when exposed to the cold. Their hands and feet may turn white, blue and then red after exposure to the cold.

The condition is characterized by episodic attacks in which the blood vessels in the extremities constrict and take a prolonged time to return to normal, usually in response to cold temperatures or emotional stress. It is more common in women and may appear between the ages of 20 and 50.

Raynaud's syndrome may appear alone or as part of a more serious disease such

as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, scleroderma or other types of vasculitis.

## Tips for treatment

**1. Acupuncture.** Chinese medicine can treat cold hands and feet effectively by increasing the distribution of blood flow throughout the body.

Kassing began receiving acupuncture treatment a month ago. After five treatments, she reported an increase in the warmth in her fingers and toes, especially at night. She now snifles less and has more energy during the day.

**2. Hot spices and ginger tea.** Any red pepper has a warming impact. Cook and eat hearty stews and soups with hot spices.

It is also important to supply the body with a sufficient amount of hot fluids during the cold winter months. The warming effect of ginger tea is even stronger. You can cut ginger into little pieces and fill a cup with boiling water.

Beware of raw and cold foods like ice cream or cold drinks. Also control your coffee and alcohol intake, since they have a negative effect on blood flow and circulation.

**3. Massage to boost circulation.** Start with the outside of the right foot and rub the leg upwards in circulating movements. Next rub the inside of the leg. Follow with a massage of the right hand up to the shoulder and then do the left side.

**4. Alternating baths.** Try to bathe alternately with hot and cold water. Put the forearm for five to 10 minutes in

warm water, and then dip it for 15 seconds in a cold bath. Although this sounds uncomfortable, it can help stimulate circulation.

**5. Wear layers when going outside.** If going outside, wear layers on your hands and feet. Wear woolen thermal underwear. Also, wear wool gloves or mittens under your outdoor gloves. Wristlets can be helpful as they can warm the blood as it enters the fingers.

**6. Exercise regularly.** Sports and exercise are an excellent way to improve circulation. Walking rapidly and swinging your arms will increase blood circulation. If you do it regularly, it has many other benefits — lowering cholesterol, improving metabolism and aiding in weight loss. Do this for 30 minutes a day and you should feel warm all over. When possible, take the stairs instead of the elevator.

**7. Don't smoke.** Smoking can cause arteriosclerosis.

**8. Take medicine properly.** Medications can be used to treat cold hands and feet. The most widely used are a class of drugs called calcium channel blockers. Aspirin also improves blood circulation, but drugs used in treating hypertension or arrhythmia could worsen the problem.





# Snowy outdoor fun at the Bird's Nest

By Chu Meng

Who needs real snow? Christmas can still be as romantic as ever at any of the various winter festivals around town, such as at the second Bird's Nest Snow Amusement Festival.



A visitor tries his luck at this challenging game.

CFP Photo



Food street



Standardized international curling field



Bumper "cars" on ice

Photos provided by Shi Lei

Forecasters say snow is nowhere on the horizon. Fortunately, the National Stadium, also called the Bird's Nest, has made its own ice and snow to create the biggest winter wonderland in town.

During the two-month snow festival, which began Saturday, visitors can enjoy a series of very seasonal games, activities and sports. The spacious floor includes a European-style castle with slides, a skating rink, snow maze and a snow-climbing cube.

Xiang Jun, a spokesperson for the stadium, said festival organizers used 25,000 tons of reclaimed water to make the snow. When it melts, the water will be collected and used to irrigate gardens and flush toilets.

"The snow has an average thickness of 1 meter," Xiang said. While the snow is very

much real, Xiang advised visitors to refrain from eating it.

Xiang said in order to turn a professional sports stadium into an amusement park, the grass had to first be taken away. Organizers then poured water onto the sand underneath and froze it to create 4 centimeters of ice. Artificial snow was then sprayed on.

"It's not a bad idea. You can ski on man-made snow in Dubai, so why not here?" said Haeiko Grasse, a tourist from Munich, last Saturday.

"We will create seasonal events almost every month from now on with assistance from the government and, importantly, the public," Xiang said. He revealed it would take about 5,000 visitors a day to cover the costs of the project.

Also, on a field north of the stadium, visitors can try curl-

ing, ski jumping, mini soccer and the relatively new sport of skiboarding. The International Skating Union will also be holding the Cross-Country Skiing Competition China Tour on Thursday.

## Open-air curling

Curling is called "the game without rhyme or reason" because people of all ages can learn to play within 20 minutes. However, it takes a lifetime to master.

Two 45-meter-long curling fields have been built in accordance with international standards. Each can field 16 players at one time.

"In order to ensure smooth surfaces, the ice was made from mineral water," said Shi Lei, an officer from the stadium. "Meanwhile, milk and liqueur were added to the water to improve its toughness and transparency."

Continued on page 21...



Ski-jump slope

Gong Wenbao/CFP





A tug-of-war competition is held during each day of the festival.

CFP Photo

...continued from page 20

For 160 yuan an hour – which includes equipment and gears – players can work with a tutor to learn the basic moves of the game.

#### Cage soccer

Nest to the curling field is a huge black iron cage that is 12 meters long, 7.2 meters wide and 3 meters high, with artificial grass. This single outdoor cage was built for mini soccer games. Cage soccer is played with three per side in a three-minute contest. It originated in the Netherlands in the 1980s and is now popular in many European and South American countries. The first soccer cage in Beijing was in APM Shopping Mall during the South African World Cup this summer. The sport is gaining popularity in big urban Asian cities where field space is limited.

#### Skiboard extreme sports park

North of the soccer cage is a park built for skiboarding, a sport that combines skiing and snowboarding. There is a performance area, a contest area and an auditorium.

The 6-meter-high, 40-meter-long slope can't compare with natural skiboard fields, but it's a good way for people to get introduced to the sport. Twenty professional coaches are on site and willing to offer free pointers.

Skiboarding is considered an extreme sport, so people who are new to it are advised to exercise caution.

#### Ski jump field

The ski jump field occupies the largest area and was built for experienced skiers. Slopes range from 10 to 30 degrees, with a jump that's 10 meters high.

#### The Bird's Nest Snow Amusement Wonderland

Where: Olympic Park station on subway Line 8. Beitucheng Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Until February 22, 9 am – 6 pm

Tel: 8437 3107

Admission: Monday to Friday, 120 yuan per person; weekends and holidays, 180 yuan



Happy Valley opens its snow carnival today.

Bao Fan/CFP



European castle with slides

Photo provided by Shi Lei

#### Other snow theme parks in town

##### Snow wonderland in royal palace

The 300-year-old Summer Palace, or Yuanmingyuan, usually sees a decline in visitors during the summer, so this year it will try to lure snow lovers to romp on its artificial-snow ski slopes.

Those who visit during Spring Festival can enjoy a temple fair while skiing and taking in the sights of the palace.

Where: Yuanmingyuan Station of subway Line 4. 28, Tsinghua Xi Lu, Haidian District

Open: Until February 17, Monday to Sunday, 9 am – 6 pm

Tel: 6262 8501

Admission: 210 yuan per person, including the entrance ticket to the palace

##### Skate with Santa at night

At the fifth Beijing Happy Valley Snow Festival, visitors can skate with Santa Claus and Snow White under a starry sky. Or take the Fiord Forest wooden train through a merry 19th century German village while gazing at colorful lights in the moonlight.

Where: Xiaowuji Bei Lu, Bei Sihuan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: Daytime activities: Until January 3, 10 am – 5:30 pm; Night: December 24 and 31, 8 pm – midnight

Tel: 6738 3333

Admission: 150 yuan per person for daytime activities, 60 yuan for the nighttime activities



## Dining

### Casa Latina, the home for all friends

LatinaHappiness is spending Christmas and New Year's Eve with the people you love.

Enjoy a heartwarming Navidad Latina. Come and let us put a smile on your face on December 24 and 31 from 7 to 10 pm as we celebrate Christmas and New Year's Eve with a skillfully crafted and lovingly prepared Christmas buffet dinner — the best dishes of the year at Casa Latina.

Where: Casa Latina, Unit 8, Building 3, Solana International Business District Bar Street, 6 Chaoy-

ang Gongyuan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: December 24 and 31, 7-10 pm

Cost: 269 yuan per person for Christmas, 288 yuan per person for New Year's Eve (reserve seats a week early for a 15 percent discount)

Kid's discount: 8 and under eat free; ages 9 to 15 eat for 136 yuan on Christmas, 148 yuan on New Year's Eve

Reservation Lines: 5905 6201, 5905 6202, 151 1024 1703

### Spring Festival at Hilton Beijing

Spring Festival is the time families across China unite to celebrate the coming of the new year. For the Year of the Rabbit, the Hilton Beijing's award-winning Elements restaurant is hosting a weeklong Chinese New Year celebration and the whole city is invited! From January 22 to 28, Elements will be serving up a special all-you-can-eat buffet menu featuring Spring Festival classics such as traditional dumplings and *niangao*.

Hilton Beijing is also offering a wide selection of

Chinese New Year gift baskets that will make you the most welcomed guest during the Year of the Rabbit.

Where: Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: January 22-28, 2011

Cost: Dinner Buffet, 248 yuan per person (January 22-27); Seafood Carnival Dinner Buffet, 328 yuan per person on January 28 (15 percent gratuity); Chinese New Year's Gift Baskets start from 299 yuan

Tel: 5865 5020

## Hotel



### Celebrate the Year of the Rabbit with a free night

In celebration of the Year of the Rabbit, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is offering the "Shangri-La Spring Package" to residents of the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau at all 69 of its hotels and resorts. Guests that book a package stay with a minimum of three consecutive nights can enjoy a complimentary night at participating Shangri-La and Traders hotels.

The "Shangri-La Spring Package," available from January 30 to February 17, includes a daily buffet breakfast for two; a complimentary roll-out bed for a third guest; guaranteed late check-out until 3 pm; and double points for paid room nights for all levels of Golden Circle members.

### Shangri-La to open Nanchang hotel in 2013

Hong Kong-based Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts held a groundbreaking ceremony today for Shangri-La Hotel, Nanchang. The hotel is scheduled to open in the second quarter of 2013.

The location will be part of a new multi-use complex built in two phases in the Honggutan New District, adjacent to the government administration office and the city's new convention center. Phase I will include 319 guestrooms with meeting and functional space and recreation facilities.

All guestrooms will have touches reflecting the local cultural heritage. Room size will range from 42 to 52 square meters, with the size of the

hotel's 18 suites ranging from 84 to 210 square meters. More than 60 percent of the rooms will overlook the Ganjiang River and its surrounding gardens. One of the four famous Chinese superstructures, the Tengwang Pavilion, and the Old City are located across the river.

### Shangri-La continues expansion in India

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, one of Asia's leading luxury hotel groups, has signed a management contract with Riverside Infrastructure (India), a subsidiary of MARG, to operate Traders Hotel, Chennai, scheduled to open in early 2012.

Located in the middle of Old Mahabalipuram Road as part of the MARG Junction Mall, a multi-use complex, the hotel will be equidistant to both Madhya Kailash and Siruseri IT Park. The development will include a mall, an office block and the 246-key hotel along with 52 service apartments. The complex will feature a perennial river flowing across the northern side of the mall.

The hotel will provide four dining and entertainment outlets including a cafe, an all-day dining restaurant and a lobby lounge for light refreshments. There will be spacious meeting and banquet facilities, a health club, a spa with beauty salon and a 25-meter outdoor pool.



### Continental Club winter promotion

This winter, enjoy refined luxury and unparalleled personal service at the Marco Polo Parkside

Continental Club. Enjoy exclusive privileges such as complimentary round-trip airport transfers by limousine, in-room VIP treatment upon arrival and Continental Club Floor benefits.

Benefits include daily buffet breakfast; express check-in and check-out; all-day coffee, tea and light refreshments; complimentary evening cocktails during Happy Hour from 5:30-6:30 pm; complimentary local telephone calls; complimentary use of the Club Lounge meeting room for a maximum of 2 hours per stay, subject to availability; complimentary in-room broadband Internet access; a daily local newspaper; and complimentary bottled water.

Where: Marco Polo Parkside Beijing, 78 Anli Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until February 28, 2011

Tel: 5963 6688



### Take a piece of heaven home

Experience heaven at home! Take home a complimentary Westin Heavenly Bed after your stay in a celebrated Renewal room or above. Whisk away tension with complimentary Bathologist service and exclusive club floor benefits.

You can get a complimentary Westin Heavenly Bed by accumulating 10 room nights; purchasing 10 room vouchers, or exploring the exclusive check-in and check-out facilities and accessing the Westin Executive Club.

Where: The Westin Beijing Financial Street, 9B Financial Street, Xicheng District

Cost: from 1,800 yuan per night (15 percent gratuity)

(By Jackie Zhang)

## Airline

### SIA increases flights in Northern Summer

Singapore Airlines will increase services across parts of its global network during the Northern Summer period, March 27 – October 29, in response to growing demand.

Airbus A380 services will be extended to Los Angeles with flights SQ12/11 operated by the super-jumbo on the Singapore-Tokyo Narita-Los Angeles route starting March 27. The route is currently served by a Boeing 747-400 aircraft. Los Angeles will be the eighth destination that the A380 will serve from Singapore.

As previously announced, SIA also plans to launch a new route, SQ68/67, to Sao Paulo, Brazil via Barcelona during summer. Sao Paulo will be the airline's first South American destination. The new service is subject to Brazilian regulatory approval.

Frequency will also be increased on select services between Singapore and points in North Asia, West Asia and Europe.



## Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

# Beaten by the ugly stick?

By Li Zhixin

Yang Zhe, one of my cousins, has been asking me out to dinner a lot since his company transferred him to Beijing from Xi'an at the beginning of last month.

The 33-year-old IT professional has been asking me to introduce him to my friends, as his social network is limited to his colleagues and former classmates.

His parents have been urging him to get married before he turns 35, but he hasn't met a woman as good as his first girlfriend, who he broke up with after

graduating from college.

He's an introverted guy, so he's somewhat of an *otaku* – a derogatory Japanese term for a social misfit who hangs out with his computer. He sometimes declines invitations to get-togethers with old classmates because many of them are married, and he gets embarrassed to tell others that he doesn't even have a girlfriend.

He asked me to help him end his single status.

Last Sunday, Zhang Na, a dancer friend of mine, invited me to watch a

dance contest at which she would be performing. I thought this would be a good chance for my cousin to meet some new people, so I asked him along.

Before the performance, we bumped into Zhang in a hallway. She had just finished putting on her make-up and was doing warm-up exercises. She looked so beautiful at that moment. I went up to her and introduced my cousin to her.

It looked like they hit it off well. They were still talking when the stage director called for her to rejoin the team for one last rehearsal.

As she was leaving, my cousin told her, "Break a leg!"

Zhang laughed and nodded before leaving.

"Why did you curse her?" I asked, and wondered why Zhang laughed.

"It's just entertainment jargon, a way of wishing actors good luck," Yang replied.

My cousin enjoyed her performance and wanted to get to know her better. He asked her out to dinner with us. She said she'd meet us there, because she needed to remove the heavy make-up from her face.

When she showed up, I could feel my cousin's disappointment. The girl who walked in was completely different from the one who performed on stage – too many freckles and wrinkles no longer hidden behind cosmetics.

During the meal, my cousin became passionless when talking with her. "I've come under the weather a bit suddenly," he said. "You keep talking, I'll listen."

The situation became awkward. I had to talk to Zhang to relieve the tension at times.

On our way home, my cousin suddenly said to me, "She's been beaten by the ugly stick, hasn't she?"

"I didn't see any wounds or scars on her face," I said. "Why would you say that?"

"You fool. I mean that she's not really nice looking without her make-up," Yang said. "Don't you think so?"



## Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

# Digital Picture Fast Flushing

By Terry Boyd-Zhang

This sign presents a good language lesson in a few basic characters. The first one, *shu*, means "number," as in *shuxue* (mathematics). We could break this character down further into three parts: *mi*, the top left part of the *shu* character, means "rice," and the bottom left is *nü*, or "woman." The half on the right is *wen*, which is a word related to "culture." For example, perhaps, a cultured man needs to keep count of his rice and women. Or, an equal amount of rice and women equals culture?

The second character is *ma*, and it also means "number," as in *dianhua haoma*, or "phone number." This character has a stone radical (*shi*) added to a horse (*ma*). However, in Chinese



characters, often one part makes up the sound (*ma* in this case) and the other half makes up the meaning. So, however many stones you have in your pocket is the "number."

The third character is *kuai*, which means "fast," as in *kuai dian'r*, or "hurry up." The fourth character, *su*, also means "fast," and is used in *sudu*, or "speed." Even though both of these "fasts" can occasionally stand on their

own, Chinese words are normally two characters long, so these two together just mean "fast."

Now, *chong*, the second-to-last character, and *yin*, the last character, is where things get tricky. You can find *yin* on copy shop signs everywhere. It means "stamp, print," and is used, for example, in photocopy (*fuyin*) and print (*dayin*). *Chongyin* actually means "to develop film," but *chong* on its own can mean "flush."

So, this is a place where you can print your digital photos, not a place where you can have your cultured cheating ex-partner's photos quickly flushed down the toilet. In general, you can't flush non-liquid material in the hutong anyway – head to the nearest five-star hotel instead.

## Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

### 1. China should have an endless supply of cheap labor considering of the large population.

**Professor Zhu Shida (ZS):** This is obviously an incorrect sentence. The error lies in the wrong usage of the adverbial phrase beginning with "considering." We have the transitive verb "to consider," which means to deliberate or to think about in order to decide. In this sample sentence, it obviously does not mean that. Then, we have "considering" as a preposition. It looks like a gerund and actually is not a gerund. It is a preposition that means taking into account; making allowance for. For instance: Considering his age, the little boy reads quite well. It is excusable considering that he is a child. Considering your age and inexperience, you have done a pretty good job. So, the sample sentence should be: China should have an endless supply of cheap labor considering its large population. The preposition "of" that follows "considering" is totally unnecessary.

**Terry Boyd-Zhang (TBZ):** Next to articles, prepositions are next hardest to learn, in my opinion. Really, there isn't an easier way – other than LEARNING them – and also, as I've said many times before, read. Read - to get a feel for what sounds right; even reading the English subtitles on a movie counts!

### 2. Set the New York City, the movie focuses on human connection.

**ZS:** Here there is a similar error as in the previous example – the wrong usage of the adverbial phrase. We may divide the sample sentence into two parts. The first is: The movie focuses on human connection. The second is: The movie is set in New York City. When you combine the two into one, you will get: Set in New York City, the movie focuses on human connection. Similarly, you may also have: The movie, which is set in New York City, focuses on human connection. In either case, the preposition "in" is absolutely necessary. If you want to use the verb "to set" transitively and do without the preposition "in," then you would have to say: Setting its backdrop in New York City, the movie focuses on human connection. Or, The movie, which sets its backdrop in New York City, focuses on human connection. So, you see that however a small matter the preposition "in" is, it will constitute a big mistake and makes the sentence totally unreadable if it is missing.

**TBZ:** Also, a city name, such as NYC, does not need an article – so, in the example, it's best to take out the "the."

### 3. No problem

**ZS:** As a modern linguistic tendency, "you're welcome" is increasingly replaced by "no problem" in situations from casual personal encounters to business deals. It is very interesting to note the difference between those who are against it and those who are for it. For some people, receiving the response "no problem" may wipe out their good will. Some especially dislike hearing "no problem" in commercial transactions and from folks in customer service jobs, as the customer is always right. Nothing a customer asks for can ever be a "problem." Some think that those who say "no problem" are very self-centered. If you are talking about "no problem," you are talking about yourself. If you say "you're welcome," the focus is still on the other person. "You're welcome" has two generally positive words, while "no problem" is doubly negative. However, the proponents of "no problem" deem that "You're welcome" is a phrase that doesn't rally convey information so much as it performs a social role. Likewise, "no problem" doesn't mean that there would be a problem if you weren't so nice; it only means the speaker has acknowledged your thanks.

**TBZ:** To be even more casual, when spoken or texting, "No problem" can be shortened to "no prob(s)" or "no worries" or a plain "sure" or "OK." Perhaps "modern linguistic tendency" is fancy-talk for "breakdown in communication" and more can be expected as time goes by. However, there is a time for casual, and a place for business – be careful to learn the difference.



**Movie of the week**

M. Night Shyamalan's reputation exploded after his brilliant production of *The Sixth Sense* in 1999. But since then, it seems like his movies have lost their spark. They're hardly terrible, but a far cry from excellence.

*Devil* has been seen as a turning point in Shyamalan's career. The first half of the movie is well done and radiates mystery. People die one after another and the plot's clues mislead viewers about the truth. But the ultimate truth behind the murders may disappoint many viewers that were expecting a bigger twist.

**Synopsis**

A group of people is trapped in an elevator one day after someone commits suicide in the morning by jumping from the same building. The security guards and engineers in the building try to save them. The circuits are fine, the system seems fine, but no one can make the elevator move.

Using the security camera, the guards and detective Bowden watch as the trapped people begin to die off one by one.

# Devil (2010)



## Scene 1

(The intro)

**Ramirez's voice-over:** When I was a child, my mother would tell me a story about how the Devil roams the Earth. Sometimes, she said, he would take human form so he could punish the damned on Earth before claiming their souls. The ones he chose would be gathered together and tortured as he hid amongst them, pretending to be one of them.

I always believed my mother was telling me an **old wives' tale** (1). My mother's story would always begin the same way, with a suicide paving the way for the Devil's arrival. And it would always end with the deaths of all those trapped.

## Scene 2

(A security guard, an old lady, a young woman, a salesman and a mechanic are trapped in an elevator.)

**Salesman (S):** When we get out of here, you're gonna need a good rest.

**Old Woman (O):** "Mattress Mania"?

**S:** That's us. Everybody's had their mattress too long. Am I right? You didn't follow that advice about flipping it every few months and now you've worn a groove into it, and you think, "Well, I'm used to it." So, hey. But I do miss the way it felt when it came fresh out of that bag.

(People tire of listening to the salesman.)

**S:** Look at those shoes, they've been through the mill. They're saying, "Someone deserves a better place to lie down."

**O:** Are you insulting my shoes?

**S:** The point is, a new mattress will cost a lot less than you think. You don't have to be as **well-off** (2) as this one.

**Young Woman:** I'm not that well-off.

**S:** What makes me good at selling mattresses is I can look at a person's clothes and know exactly how much they can afford to spend. And you, lady, you're no **super sleeper** (3).

(The music continues playing in the elevator car.)

**Mechanic:** Oh, my God. They keep playing this song over and over and over.

## Scene 3

(The salesman is killed when the elevator light goes out. Detective Bowden and the security guards Ramirez and Lustig are trying to find the killer.)

**Lustig (L):** Did you just want video of the guy who died, or also the girl that got hurt?

**Bowden (B):** All of it since they got in the car.

**L:** OK.

**Ramirez (R):** Detective, you see?

(Ramirez points at the screen where they can see a devil's face on it.)

**B:** That's what you're talking about?

**R:** Everybody believes in him a little bit, even guys like you who pretend they don't.

(Bowden gives Ramirez a note.)

**R:** What's this?

**B:** An apology note left at the site of a **hit-and-run** (4). My wife and son were killed down on Bethlehem Pike five years ago, but that's OK, because whoever did it is sorry. You can tell by the heartfelt apology on the back of a car wash coupon. So, no, I don't believe in the Devil. We don't need him. People are bad enough by themselves.

## Vocabulary

**1. wives' tale:** a type of myth or urban legend

**2. well-off:** wealthy

**3. super sleeper:** someone who is lazy and poor

**4. hit-and-run:** traffic accident where the culprit flees the scene

(By Wang Yu)

